



PHD

How can I as an educator and professional development manager working with teachers, support and enhance the learning and achievement of pupils in a whole school improvement process?

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How can I as an educator and Professional Development Manager working with teachers, support and enhance the learning and achievement of pupils in a whole school improvement process?

Submitted by Michael Anthony Boshier

**For The Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
The University of Bath
2001**

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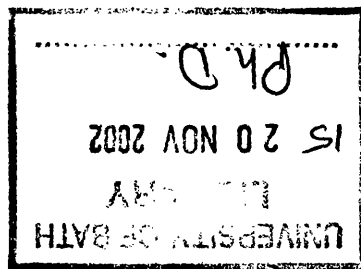
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Abstract

This thesis is a personal journey through an educational world of continuing professional development. It is located at school level, and the fields of School Effectiveness and School Improvement act as a context within which this learning process is framed. I claim three aspects of originality in this thesis.

The first claim is the manner in which the thesis has engaged in a personal learning process using insights from the paradigm of Action Research, and the fields of School Effectiveness and School Improvement. These are combined and grounded in my day-to-day professional life as an educator and provide a means of showing how my learning is integrated into a school improvement process. It also shows how my living educational theory develops.

My second claim is that I develop my critical judgement and living theory as I evaluate a school's development. This is in terms of improving the teaching and learning experiences with its staff and pupils and as I engage with, and use the ideas from others.

I express my originality of mind and critical judgement in creating my own living educational theory as I show how the scholarships of discovery, integration, application and teaching, are included within my scholarship of educational enquiry.

Preface

This preface is intended to help the reader to make sense of the writing that follows. This is not to underestimate the intellectual capacity of the reader or indeed to pre-empt the concept of drawing personal meaning or theory from what is to follow; but to give the reader a lens through which this thesis can be viewed and interpreted.

Signposts

To help the reader to understand and appreciate the flow of the narrative, I have included at the start of each chapter a signpost in italic to '*show the way*' during the chapter. I hope in this way that the reader will appreciate the multiplicity of strands, themes and journeys that are taking place throughout the thesis. Also to recognise the Action Research cycles as they occur and appreciate the holding together of Aristotelian Propositional Logic, and the Socratic Dialectical Logic, the '*one and the many*'.

The use of 'I'

My aim in this preface is to act as the teacher with his pupil. To give the reader a firm sense of what is to come, and to show how the strands of the School Improvement and School Effectiveness fields and the Action Research paradigm are intertwined with the personal and professional development of 'self' as expressed as 'I' within the thesis. The focus on the 'I' is not accidental, but a considered response to the methodology employed. This methodology is discussed in detail in Chapter 3, but the justification is that 'I' as the participant teacher researcher am central to the thesis as I explore my own learning and practice in the school improvement process. There are three forms of 'I' considered in this thesis, 'I' the researcher developing and thinking as I work with colleagues and pupils in an improvement process. 'I' the Professional Development Manager involved in school improvement activities with my colleagues as a part of their professional development and 'I' the learner. To do this successfully, I will use an Action Research approach that uses 'self' as the focus. This will help the reader to understand that I am using a synthesis of ideas from these fields and the paradigm, and showing how a teacher researcher can create his own living theory whilst acknowledging and integrating insights from the fields of others. Hitchcock and Hughes (1989a: 209) support the Schön (1983) idea of the '*reflective practitioner*' and the Stenhouse (1975) '*self-reflective teacher*' in '*empowering professionals and generating critically effective emancipatory activities that feed into effective practice*'. This thesis is immersed in the concept of the reflective practitioner, me,

as I engage with colleagues in Action Research cycles which are critically evaluated, amended and progressed. The 'self' as an integral part of the narrative is contextualised by Ricoeur (1985) when considering its use in the MacLure (1996) form of a 'transition'.

Ricoeur (1985:280) in his analysis of narrative makes the point that:

A transition only makes sense within the frame of a coherent story; but that story is not yet told, and in turn gets its coherence from the ways in which individual episodes, and the transitions between them, are put together. The parts advance, cumulatively, towards the whole; but the whole (that does not yet exist) tells you 'in advance' how to read the parts.

It is that concept of transition which links the past with the present and the future that gives the sense of reality to the research, and makes my part, 'self' the cement that binds the action and works of colleagues and students together. The story of 'self' then is an important component in the framework of the thesis in allowing the reader to understand what fits what, where, when and why. This standpoint is crucial because what I have done in this research is to transcend the 'paradigm wars' (Anderson and Herr, 1999). These wars are the intellectual debate between the positivists', the interpretativists' and the critical theorists' research point of view on the legitimacy of different forms of research, which originate from different paradigmatic stand points. Researchers like Schön have been arguing their points about these 'paradigm wars', and I pick up the main thrust of that 'war' and the concept of rigour in Chapter 3. I hope that this thesis shows one way to move that debate forwards. By suggesting that I transcend these 'paradigm wars', I am highlighting the style of my research and its narration, as being one that does not fit comfortably into any of the fields, as they exist at the moment. I have had to use a synthesis of ideas from the fields and the paradigm to help me to articulate my living educational theory. Hence, I, like Schön, am looking for another epistemology within which to frame my work. The dialectical and propositional way in which I work with my colleagues is an active demonstration of this transcendent process. The establishment of particular arguments at times during the thesis and the creative way in which the arguments are resolved in a dialectical sense, is part of the uniqueness of this thesis. This process is at the heart of my originality, demonstrating my learning as I work with others on the school improvement process. The concept of a living educational theory is discussed at length in the foreword that follows. This indicates that while the world of educational research is just approaching the point of real acceptance of Action Research as an appropriate paradigm as outlined by Brown et al (1999), I have been involved in the process for four years. I want to emphasis the significance of this research as an original contribution to the world of education and educational research.

Paradigm and fields - a synthesis and synergy

Part of the claims to originality in this thesis is how I have used the synthesis and synergy of ideas from the paradigm of Action Research and the educational research fields of School Improvement and School Effectiveness. I am not claiming here to have created a new paradigm, or indeed merged paradigms and fields together into a new concept. All that I am claiming is the integration of insights from these areas in the creation of my living educational theory. The merging or creating of paradigms is a point of argument because the researcher Denzin (1994) argues that there are only four paradigms, positivist, postpositivist, constructivist and critical. So in essence, such a paradigm as Action Research is not a paradigm. The debate on paradigms has been taken up by researchers like (Hart, 1993, Mrazek, 1993, Connell, 1997 and Reid and Gough, 2000). It continues as a current educational debate, and I feel justified in adding my voice. Here I want to sensitise the reader to the processes of synthesis and synergy that I have undertaken. This flies in the face of researchers like Robottom and Hart (1993) who argue that paradigms are '*incommensurable*'. While almost by definition this must be so, I suggest that I have taken ideas and strategies from them and formed a synergy that explains where I am and what I am doing. The strength of this is that the development of the pupils, the teachers, the school and myself can be seen as one story as the research is undertaken. I have used the process to illustrate how I, as an educator, have engaged with the systems of the school in a whole school improvement process. My contribution to the educational knowledge base is that I have helped to take forward an understanding of what is needed in an educational setting. This has brought together individuals, groups and the whole organisation in a corporate desire to improve performance through my own learning. The cyclic nature of Action Research has enabled me to identify and emphasise the school development processes within the plan, act, evaluate and re-plan cycle. At the same time it has allowed me to integrate my own learning into those cycles in a way that contributes to the whole school improvement process. Within these cycles are the strategies initiated for School Improvement and School Effectiveness. Woven into the fabric of this narrative is my own learning, my work as an educator and my work as the Professional Development Manager. In my view, teaching is a complex activity with many interrelated strands. It is this interrelatedness that I recognise as being a central part of any teaching. When looking at my practice and trying to understand it I have always felt the need to keep a notion of 'wholeness' central to my thinking. It is the whole picture that is important if I am to understand what I am doing. As I engage with this Action Research into my practice, I

‘zoom in’ to examine a particular aspect, but I also need to ‘zoom out’ in order to keep a check on the whole. I hope that the narrative of the thesis helps the reader to do the same. It is important to keep the Socratic idea of holding the several particulars and the whole together at the same time. Briggs (1992:21) sums up the process by saying, *‘dynamical systems imply a holism in which everything influences, or potentially influences everything else – because everything is in some way constantly interacting with everything else’*. This concept of wholeness and processes being ‘held together’ are cornerstones of my research methodology.

The frame of the thesis is formed by my originality of mind and critical judgement as I engage in a *‘self-study’* (Zeichner, 1998) of my professional life as a manager and an educator. I create my own living educational theory in the description and explanation of my own professional learning and integrate the scholarships of discovery, integration, application and teaching within my educational enquiry.

Research context

Throughout the thesis, both the historical and current educational research standpoints will be discussed, together with the research literature that supports the various arguments put forward. Woven into the fabric of this narrative, will be the various studies and initiatives that I have undertaken in my school. To help the reader understand these in context, I have chosen the vehicle offered by Michael Bassey’s (1995) study of a *‘singularity’*, me.

Within this study, there will be an opportunity for the reader to engage with a series of vignettes used to illustrate school improvement initiatives in which my colleagues and I have been involved in an attempt to bring about school improvement. Outlined in

Appendix 1 is the historical overview of the School Improvement and School Effectiveness fields. Historically, these started as unconnected fields with little or no interchange of ideas between them, both having polarised views on the appropriate courses of action required to bring about change in the educational system. As the thesis is developed, the historical synergy of these two movements is noted. In Chapters 5 some current views of School Improvement and School Effectiveness research projects are noted. Their inclusion is intended to highlight some similarities and parallels with the work at St John’s.

The current educational research standpoint of teacher researchers and Action Research is outlined below and is discussed in Chapter 9 as a conclusion to my work. At the British

Educational Research Association (BERA) national conference held at Bath University in March 1999, Pam Lomax (1999c) presented an address entitled '*Educational Action Research Within Research-based Professionalism*'. In this address, she outlined the principles that may be adopted by the association that could underpin '*a new evidence based professionalism*'. My interpretation of the thrust of her argument is to unite the key players, teachers and universities to form a research partnership. To use the '*collaborative energies*' of both teachers and universities to strengthen a research based professionalism. Why should educators need to do this? The answer is multifaceted. Firstly to fight the concept of '*proletarianisation*' suggested by Lawn and Ozga (1988), the concept of the de-skilling of teachers. Secondly, to raise the status of teaching to that of the '*professional*' in the eyes of other professionals rather than the current status of the '*semi-professional*'. Thirdly to debunk the traditional concept of professionalism which was noted in Lomax's (1999b: 12) paper as '*a measurement against an ideal type*'.

The institutionalised knowledge of the classical model was an example of the monopolisation of knowledge, with a club of experts based in the Universities who decided what could be counted or not. There is a general agreement that this approach was too elitist and that today all professional stakeholders should be involved in deciding the professional base of teaching.

I concur with Lomax, and Hargreaves and Goodson's (1996) suggestion of a more people orientated concept of professionalism as being '*about the quality and character of peoples' actions*'. Teachers and pupils should have the opportunity to contribute to the knowledge base of the profession in which they are engaged. I might go even further and suggest that the teachers should have the major say in what constitutes that professional knowledge. They are the people who are primarily engaged in the activity of teaching in schools and the group who have the clearest and most intimate first hand experience of what constitutes both teaching and learning. The pupils also have a place in the construction of this knowledge and should have a '*voice*' as Rudduck *et al* (1996a) suggest. The ideal of teachers' continuing professional development is at its healthiest when they are an active partner and central to the development process. The development of professionalism must involve dialogue between people, not just be a passive acceptance of what others say, as Lomax and Whitehead (1998:12) point out:

Professionalism is a process with a dialectical rather than consensual basis. Constrained disagreement could be a productive basis for action.....Constrained disagreement implies both critique and collaboration.

I have in this thesis involved others and myself in dialectical activity and disagreement. Further, I have been totally immersed in collaboration with others in the process of

improvement within a school, vindicating the course of action outlined by Lomax and Whitehead. The context must go further than this however. The thesis will utilise and synthesise ideas from Action Research, School Effectiveness and School Improvement as a vehicle to show how my learning develops, and considers how best to work with my colleagues and the students as we all engage in the improvement process. This is, I claim, one of the unique features of the thesis. It has been possible because in the terms of Lomax (1998 and 1999d: 13) the school involved enjoys an '*educative relation*'.

An educative relation is one where each side is equally willing to teach and to learn as opposed to a relation where one always teaches and the other always learns. It is a relation where differences between individuals, such as differences in perceived and actual authority and power, are overcome.

The staff and the pupils in the school have co-operated in a way that has enabled the education of both groups to occur and the process of improvement to take place. The learning environment prevalent in the school, the ethos of learning and teaching and the management of those processes are explored within the framework of the thesis. McNiff *et al*, (1996); Whitehead (1998); Eames (1995); Evans (1995); Holly (1997) and others join the growing acceptance of Action Research as a paradigm in its own right. It is used as a means of exploring educational issues and to bring about change in educational practice at classroom level. (Lomax, 1999d: 5) suggests:

My view of Action Research requires action towards improvement; making one's own practice the focus; involving others as collaborators; aiming to generate theory about practice; using rigorous methods to generate data; validating evidence both professionally and academically; and publishing results.

Action Research allows for dynamism, growth, development and change at classroom level. I have frequently used Lomax's (1999d) concept of a '*double dialectic of learning*' in this thesis as a means of describing how both the teachers and pupils have learnt as they have engaged in a number of improvement initiatives together with the reflection on the results of those initiatives. Additionally, I show how I have developed as I have tried to recognise, explain and describe my own learning. These two elements are the thrust of the Action Research in this thesis.

From my own school research, convincing my colleagues of the value that can be accrued from making public their own research and classroom experiences has, and is, proving to be difficult. A major factor in this process is work such as that which I have undertaken. There is insufficient case study and knowledge of teacher activity at present. The more frequently teachers undertake this form of research and pass it onto others, whether they be

new teachers, educational researchers or other teachers looking at their own practice, the more useful and pragmatic the information within the knowledge base will be. Stoll (1999) makes a valuable contribution to this debate by undertaking an analysis of factors associated with schools' and teachers' learning. She highlights the potential that teacher research can and should make to the educational knowledge base. She has identified how schools must develop the '*internal capacity to learn*' and has suggested how both teachers and the schools themselves should go about this. More comment on this work will be found in Chapters 5 and 9.

Strands and themes

The reader will see a series of strands developing as the thesis progresses which are held together in the narrative. This holding together '*the several with one*' is a concept of Logic from Socrates and Plato that is explored in Chapter 9. Some of these strands are described in the Propositional Logic style of Aristotle, some in the Dialectical Logic of Socrates through Plato and some in the plain narrative form of me describing thoughts, processes and actions as a practising educator. Another unique claim to the thesis is that I am holding these two forms of Logic together simultaneously using both as descriptors and for analysis as I bring my values and standards into the education arena. The strands that are held together during the narrative are:

The development of my own living educational theory.

My personal development as an individual during the process of writing this thesis.

The journey of my learning as an educator and Professional Development Manager.

The synthesis of insights from the school improvement and school effectiveness fields in a whole school improvement process.

The concept of two different Logics being held together at the same time.

The autobiography of a professional educator.

Action Research as a method of bringing about school improvement.

Critical judgement

One aspect of the work that will be evident throughout the thesis is that of 'critical judgement'. I have engaged with the research literature to support and to challenge my work. I have intentionally used quotations to illustrate points that I think are of relevance throughout, and these are displayed in bold italics. The other italicised work is specific to key concepts of researchers. The references are identified at the end of the thesis and all quotations are attributed. Critical judgement is a difficult concept to make

overt. I have not ignored or avoided argument or selectively quoted only data that is supportive. I have tried to argue the case as fairly as possible being always aware of subjective bias. To this end I have used research literature as widely as possible to engage fully with concepts that both support and oppose my own views. I could be accused of 'cherry picking' appropriate quotations to suit my arguments, but my intention throughout has been to use the literature to strengthen my own learning by grounding the work in a research literature base. During the thesis I will show that some of the ideas and initiatives have been successful and others failures. Both groups have been included to give the thesis the necessary balance and to avoid the accusation of a valedictory narrative.

Added to this judgement, I have used a variety of personal attributes which have personalised the thesis and given a framework to allow the reader to understand how I have made judgements and brought about actions during the school improvement process. From an objective standpoint, I have taken note of the guidance given by Reid and Gough (2000) in an attempt to produce a piece of research which rigorously meets the criteria of relevance, validity and quality. Triangulation discussed in Chapter 3 together with 'hard indicators' such as examination results and the submission to '*dialectical validity*' tests (Anderson and Herr, 1999:16) have been the methods by which these features have been achieved. In the '*paradigm wars*' referred to by Anderson and Herr (1999:12) they make a reference to educational research and particularly narrative knowledge being '*viewed by universities as lacking in intellectual rigour*'. Anderson and Herr (1999:14) go on to comment that:

This lack of reconceptualization in universities creates barriers for practitioner researchers when they interface with university structures. For example, practitioner research presents institutional review boards with unique ethical, political and methodological puzzles that currently confound many review board members

I hope this research with its own style and approach to classroom research with teachers and pupils in school will be presented in a format that meets both the traditional and the new criteria for validity and academic worth.

Those interested in living the research with me might wish to move directly to Chapter 6 page 120 onwards with the first of my vignettes. Others might appreciate moving through the thesis in the order it is presented to develop a sense of school context, autobiography, methodology and Action Research as a paradigm.

Introduction

This introduction shows to the reader the framework within which the thesis is set. It engages with the fields of School Improvement and School Effectiveness together with the paradigm of Action Research and discusses how my professional role, my values and my beliefs will be integrated in the thesis. My own learning will be central to the thesis and the strands and journeys that permeate the thesis are introduced here.

My inquiry - a brief overview

My research is being undertaken 'in house' at my school, St John's School and Community College in Marlborough. The context for the need to raise achievement is documented in Chapter 1. Over-arching all activity is my learning and how knowledge of that learning is woven into the life of the school community and myself as we seek to bring about an improvement in performance. The enquiry is an Action Research based enquiry and the cycles of development will be noted as they emerge through the text.

The framework of my inquiry

The task that I have to achieve is to put together the story of how I, using an Action Research paradigm focussing on my own teaching and learning, explain the relationship between my developing educational theory and my professional activities. I need to show how this contributes to the process of raising achievement in the school. I will tell the story of how my actions interrelate with those of the pupils and my colleagues as part of an overall process. Embedded within this is a philosophical view of the nature of the relationships that I as an educator and Professional Development Manager have established with my colleagues. I am looking for ways of representing what I personally bring to the education process. I am trying to write an account of how I as an educator represent the qualities I have and the values I hold in education.

At the end of this research, I hope to be in a position to use the findings to help other colleagues in the school to develop a deeper insight into the process of teaching and learning. As a result, also enhancing the learning environment for the pupils and increasing the level of expertise of the teaching staff.

It will be the research-based professionalism of myself that will lead to the development of my own living educational theory as I wrestle with the integration of the ideas from the other two fields.

Using my values and professional learning as a tool, I wish to consider passing on the skills of the teacher in a different way. For some years now, Lomax, Whitehead, Eames, Laidlaw and others have been using Action Research of the kind 'How can I improve my....' to describe and explain the learning and action that has taken place by teachers in the classroom. I wish to be part of this movement, but I wish to take it further. My study will incorporate the values from these studies plus the added dimension of placing that learning experience within the context of a school, which is itself developing work from the fields of School Effectiveness and School Improvement.

I want to undertake this research in my way so that I can truly say at the end of the process that this is mine. This is the way I think, act and feel. To do that, I must at the outset draw a picture of what I intend to do and the way in which I intend to do it. To explain what drives my professional life, what learning I have achieved and how. These are the intangibles that I wish to pass onto the next generation of teachers. There is an intellectual argument here about the different ways in which people learn. Piaget's theory of learning noted in (Capel *et al*, 1996:218) suggests that ***'Development is not a continuous accumulation of things learnt step by step, but 'intellectual' revolutions equal to change in the structure of intelligence'***.

This intelligence component is a factor that in 2002 the school is to address as a major project. The idea of multiple intelligences for each child will be explored and will become an embedded part of the teaching strategy, and part of the target setting process for the pupils. Here is an example of a theoretical idea being put into practice as a result of a teacher's research experience at classroom level. This new initiative is beyond the scope of this thesis. The theory by Vygotsky (Capel *et al*, 1996:op cit) claims that instruction is the path to learning.

The capacity to learn through instruction is central. He argues that intelligence is determined not only by a capacity to learn but also by a capacity for being taught, and he introduces the concept of a 'zone of proximal development' in his theory of learning. This concept refers to the gap between what an individual pupil can do alone often without help of a teacher and what they can achieve with the help of instruction of a more knowledgeable person.

I have affinity with that recognition of the value of the teacher. It does not matter whether the pupil is a child or an adult; the learning activity needs direction if maximum benefit is to be gained. That instruction or teaching needs to be well informed, accurate and appropriate, and I hope research data such as I am presenting will be helpful in this process.

I am showing the life of one professional educator with the intention of creating a knowledge base from which other teachers can make decisions about their own practice. While this may seem to be both arrogant and self indulgent, I would argue that there is only a small amount of documented research evidence written by teachers on their practice in the classroom. I am proud of what I do, what I have achieved and what I can pass onto others in the profession.

I will be using the vehicle of the classroom and the every day activities of a school in an improvement process to explain and describe those feelings and values, and the end product will be an articulation of my own living educational theory. (Zeichner, 1998) with his '*new scholarship of teacher education*' supports the concept of self-study as being crucial to this exposition of values that are an integral part of my professional practice.

I propose throughout the narrative to exhibit my learning and explain how I as the Professional Development Manager have used that learning to bring about a change in others. One of the important areas of the thesis will be the area of reflection in Chapter 8 where a researcher from Bath University, Mrs Susan Gibbs, helps me to validate the values and standards I hold. These values are identified in Chapter 2 and are recognised and highlighted as they emerge during my classroom teaching. Such fundamental values of humility, care for others, openness, a love for education and a passion for what I do will be noted in the thesis. My account is an authentic account of my learning with the failures and successes as they occur. Importantly it shows what I have learnt from them and how I used that knowledge to move the school, and myself forwards. These standards of judgement play an important part in the creation of my living educational theory.

My learning in the role of Professional Development Manager is the link with the School Improvement and School Effectiveness components. My increased knowledge and appreciation of my standards and values, and how to bring them to the whole arena of the

school's activities shows other teachers how to understand and bring out their own values as they engage in School Effectiveness and School Improvement activities. It allows for the sharing of those values in a collaborative whole school approach.

The School Improvement component

This will recognise that in the light of performance concerns, a number of initiatives are being and have been tried to enhance that performance. I decided that I should focus on a small number of these initiatives that would show my direct relationship, learning and involvement in the process. The reader is alerted to the diversity of initiatives being undertaken. They are listed in chronological order of implementation, not of importance or effectiveness. A detailed discussion of some of these initiatives will be found in Chapters 4, 6 and 7, with evaluations of an initiative in **Appendix 2**. Of these initiatives, a focus will be made of:

- An in-depth study of an individual teacher who is an outstanding professional judged by examination results at all levels of ability and age, and by colleague acclamation (Initiative 26).
- Yr. 11 mentoring programme with selected and identified pupils in the C / D boundary area for projected GCSE examination results.
- Yr. 10 mentoring programme undertaken with one tutor group together with intensive coaching and pupil supervision, and running concurrently a middle ability initiative. (Initiative 27).
- An enquiry into self-esteem testing and how data from such a process can help in the achievement process (Initiative 2).

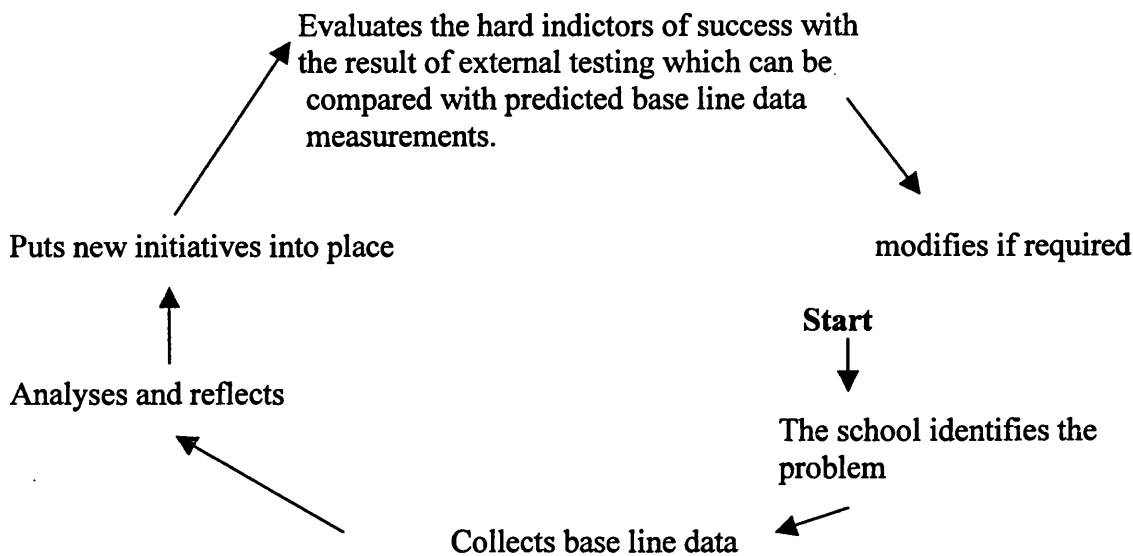
Feelings and actions

In Chapter 4 the enquiry will record in diary form staff perceptions, feelings and attitudes. Throughout Chapters 4, 6 and 7 evaluations are made as the initiatives progress and measurements against hard indicators are used when they are available.

An action cycle

Identification of 'improvement' that has taken place is a key component of these initiatives, and the action cycle to support this as the structure is seen as Figure 1. The thesis looks at 4 improvement initiatives as vignettes to describe, examine and evaluate action cycles. Data for the other initiatives is available but these are not studied in detail.

Figure 1: The Action Cycle



Evaluations

What is important is that initiatives are monitored while in progress and at the end point. Evaluations from pupils which indicate their positive feelings such as ‘I can now do……’, ‘I now feel better at doing……’, ‘I can now find out where I can get the information from’, all indicate progress for the initiatives. These indications will show that they believe that they can now manage their own learning process. Such a process was used as part of the Yr. 11 Mentoring Initiative discussed in Chapter 7.

This improvement process embraces the research literature of Hopkins *et al* (1994) showing that any sustained improvement has to come from inside the school itself, not have it imposed from outside. The idea of developing a ‘*cadre*’ of staff and pupils working on improvement, and the concepts from Hopkins *et al* of collegiality and collaboration which need to be embodied by the school will also be addressed and recognised where relevant. In addition, work on sustainability from inside, the ‘*Teacher Artistry*’ by Rubin (1985) and work on teaching and learning styles will all form part of the dialogue. This work will enhance the investigations and subsequent conversations that I have with Alan Shelton, the focus for Chapter 6. At the end of this process, I will discuss the relevance of the work of David Reynolds *et al* (1993) as they show how the School Improvement and School Effectiveness fields move closer together within a school framework and how in my work, I have merged the two within the school’s initiatives. This concludes the introduction to the thesis. The next chapter sets the scene for the historical background to the start of the research.

Chapter 1 - A Cultural Context

This first chapter gives an overview of the school and the genesis of the enquiry. It leads the reader through the series of events that resulted in an Action Research enquiry being formulated. It shows how the school started to initiate strategies for improvement and gives an indication of the motivation of the teacher–researcher in undertaking the study.

The Genesis

My enquiry is an Action Research based study focussing on improvement activities in one school. The strength of such an approach is that it is a natural event recorded as it happens in the usual environment of the pupils and the staff of the school. As with many educational studies, there are difficulties in making comparisons with other schools. Comparisons of ‘hard indicators’ such as examination results, attendance figures or National Test results are possible, but the ‘value added’ factors of each school are unique. Factors which will impinge on, and have a dramatic effect on the course of my enquiry such as ‘soft indicators’ **Appendix 3** are more difficult to measure and impossible to compare across schools. ‘Soft indicators’ are such factors as motivation, self-esteem, integrity and the willingness to take risks. The shortcomings of such an approach are the ‘reliability of the observer’s analysis’, and the typicality or representativeness of any results to education as a whole. These are all factors that I will attempt to validate by the methodological process of triangulation.

While the application of successful strategies will have a wider audience, the monitoring and evaluation of the ‘soft indicator’ results in particular will be pertinent to my school only.

I am a central figure in this research and am undertaking the role as Roy (1952) suggests as the ‘*Participant Observer*’. The core theme of this thesis is to describe and explain how my learning as an individual, as an educator and as a Professional Development Manager has impacted upon and affected the improvement initiatives that were being undertaken by the school. I am using the school activities as a frame within which I can explicate this process.

What I am attempting to do is to illustrate, describe and analyse my own learning and how best to use that learning to help my colleagues in the school’s attempt to raise the level of academic achievement of its pupils. Implicit within this is the need for me to analyse my

own developing educational theory. I need to explain what drives me during my professional activities of teaching and assisting others in the quest for improvement of the pupils in the school and show how my values, beliefs and standards are all part of that theory. What has affected and influenced my own development as a teacher, and how my personality and my relationship with others affected my interactions within my working environment. I am a 55-year-old teacher with 35 years of teaching experience. Currently I am the Deputy Headteacher, and a member of the Senior Management Team. At the start of the enquiry, I was the Head of Upper School and a Senior Teacher.

The School

The school provides secondary education for the children of Marlborough, a market town in the South of England, and the surrounding villages. It is a Foundation 11 - 18 comprehensive school offering the National Curriculum, 'A' levels and a range of other courses. It was accorded Technology College status in 1997. At present, the school, with a student population of 1,370 including 300 in the 6th Form, is the largest state school in the county. The school intake as noted in the OFSTED report of March 1996 states:

The socio-economic circumstances of many of the pupils are favourable; some, however come from more disadvantaged backgrounds. Although the pupils represent the full range, the overall level of ability is above average. Approximately 5% of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, a figure that is well below the county and national averages. Statements of special educational needs have been made in respect of 11 pupils, a figure which is also well below the county and national averages. In 1995 85% of the Year 11 pupils continued into full time education and 56% of the Year 13 pupils entered higher education. Both figures are well above the county and national averages.

At Year 7 entry level, the school has thirteen feeder primary schools. The school is housed on two sites 1.2 miles apart. The Savernake Building houses Years 7 - 9 and the Stedman Building Years 10 - 13. The latter building is also the main administrative centre of the school.

The background to the study

Following an analysis of examination results at GCSE level for the year 1994/5, the Senior Management Team made a value judgement that the school was not achieving the results that it should considering the catchment area and the intellectual ability of the pupils on intake in Year 7 as measured by intake data. A resolution was made to address the situation as a matter of urgency. Coincidentally, a presentation from the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) the Head of Department (HOD) for Curriculum and Pupil Support

(CAPS = pupils with Special Needs) in the school was made during November 1995 on the new base line data tests called Cognitive Ability Tests (C.A.Ts) being used by the school. The Head of Department made the presentation to the Senior Management Team (SMT) who were interested in their potential value to pupils and staff. C.A.Ts are a series of tests devised and scored by the National Foundation for Educational Research (N.F.E.R).

The start of the research

During the presentation, the potential for a wider use of the data to the school became clear, and the possibility of research on the effects and value to the school of this data was recognised. I recognised that the school could use this data to build a base line of knowledge that could be added to as pupils moved through the school. The premise for this research was that if the school could utilise the information at an earlier stage, perhaps those pupils who sit in the middle ability range and who eventually become the C/D boundary pupils at GCSE could be helped by intervention activities. Examples such as extra support, more differentiated work or remedial education in its widest sense could help to raise their level of achievement. Additionally, the most able and least able students could also benefit from the appropriate use of such data at classroom level. The Deputy Head (Curriculum) was also fired with enthusiasm for improving the existing situation. A working party was established to pull together all the strategies that were already being undertaken to improve the existing situation.

Personal motivation

My own personal need at the time was to undertake more academic research. I completed my Masters Degree in 1994 and was beginning to feel withdrawal symptoms from a lack of intellectual stimulation. I had set myself a personal target to undertake a Ph.D at some time in my career, and this was the point at which I made a decision to start. I was particularly keen to undertake the degree with the University of Bath because of my professional connections with the University's Department of Education. As a Senior School Tutor with the Post-Graduate Certificate in Education Initial Teacher Training (ITT) Programme, I was aware of the excellent reputation of the Department of Education and of its international involvement in the areas of School Improvement, School Effectiveness and Action Research and I was interested in combining all three in my research. Action Research because the activity I was to embark on was going to develop and grow. School Improvement as the pupils were to be involved in activities that would enhance their performance and the School Effectiveness as the monitoring and evaluation

of the strategies and processes used would make the school, as an institution, a more effective place. In view of the research area, I contacted Dr J. Whitehead at the University for preliminary discussions. The Senior Management Team (SMT) at the school was very receptive to my offer of undertaking research in this area, as it would be of direct benefit to the school.

Raising standards

The issue of raising standards in education has become a focus for educational research worldwide. In 1996, School Improvement and School Effectiveness research fields had been two separate educational fields working towards the end of raising standards in school. In the U.S.A, Great Britain, New Zealand and the Netherlands there was a distance between the two movements. It was only in Israel where there was some combination of the two, (Bashi *et al*, 1990). Canada was the other area where a more concerted approach of combination was taking place. Reynolds *et al* (1993) point out that one field rarely takes notice of or uses the research material of the other. Researchers such as Fullan, Hall, Miles, Louis, and Joyce: (Fullan, 1991) rarely use work on School Effectiveness during their work on School Improvement, and the School Effectiveness researchers like (Mortimore 1991, Reynolds, 1991 and Reid *et al*, 1986) have not used the work of the School Improvement field. The net effect of this is that progress is slow. Tate (1996:38) argues cogently for a synergy of the two fields:

It is hypothesised that the further linking of these hitherto separate disciplines would advance our knowledge of how to generate high quality schools for our children.

To enhance the concept of synergy, this research project will build on the strengths of these two fields and add the action involved in Action Research. The later work of Delong and Widemen (1996) outlining the work done in some Ontario schools clearly indicate that this form of research will allow improvement to take place within schools at individual and classroom level.

Harris *et al* (1996) noted that a wide range of differing traditions were beginning to converge on the theme of effectiveness and quality, and this project utilises this concept to bring about improvement at an individual teacher and pupil level in one school.

I also proposed that the research would start with the pupils working from the 'bottom up'. Research to date had primarily been 'top down' with the School Effectiveness and School

Improvement fields focusing on whole school activities or initiatives undertaken by Local Education Authorities and cascaded down to schools. Jack Whitehead's feelings were that a combination of these three together with the subsequent learning and interpretation of that learning would be a unique contribution to the academy.

In addition, I as the 'teacher researcher' would be part of the process and would be giving my own personal account of my involvement in the process. I put forward a proposal to the Education Research Committee at the University. The Research Committee accepted the proposal and I started to undertake the research with the initial research question:

How can I help my school to raise the achievement of middle ability children?

I was excited about what was happening in the school. As already noted, the school had recognised that its outcomes were not as good as they should have been and a number of initiatives were established to alleviate the areas of concern. These were already in place and operational before the January 1996 OFSTED inspection took place. The required OFSTED Action Plan made note of the activities already in place and those planned, and all concerned with these initiatives set off on their task with vigour.

It took me some time to come to terms with the role I was to play. The staff knew that I had agreed to undertake this research. I was anxious not to appear as the expert in all the initiatives taking place, or the person responsible for their implementation and administration. I saw myself as an 'encourager, facilitator and a data collector'. There were a number of occasions when there appeared to be no one on the staff with the specific responsibility for pushing these developments forward, and on those occasions I took the lead role in ensuring continuity and progress.

The history of the raising of achievement process in the school

The history of this process can be seen as **Appendix 4** and includes the rationale for the formation of the Raising Achievement Working Party that was the start of the initiatives in the improvement process.

The appointment of a new Headteacher

In September 1996 a new Headteacher was appointed who had a very different style from the previous Headteacher. This involved creating a different philosophy of action in the school and a different (i.e. flatter) management structure.

School improvement activities

During 1996 and into 1997 the strategies for raising achievement were initiated and continued, and the intervention strategies piloted were put into place. (Chapters 4, 6 and 7). My participation on the Raising Achievement Working Party meant that I was close to many of the initiatives that had been started; (**Appendix 4**). The School Development Plan of April 1997 included a complete section on the raising of achievement. It was a mandatory part of all department plans that there should be developments in this area contributing to the whole school plan. These had to be clearly identified together with their evaluative processes and their monitoring procedures. As part of the process, all departments were instructed to make the issue of Raising Achievement a standing item on all department meeting agendas. The SMT felt that in this way the issue would be raised on a regular basis and would remain as a high profile item in all department's planning and actions. The first part of the Action Cycle had started.

Shortly after the Development Plans were written came the news of possible staff redundancies, and from that moment on, that is from April to July 1997, little development of any kind occurred in the school. As part of the management process to overcome the issue of redundancy and the loss of key members of staff, in April 1997 the Headteacher appointed me to the post of Assistant Headteacher and Professional Development Manager. This is a proactive position in the management of the school where I was able to directly influence the actions of individual staff and Directorates. The term Directorates replaced Department in September 1997 when the new staffing structure came in to operation. My post carries the title manager and with it the implication that I have a duty to be involved pro-actively in the developments, not just co-ordinating any activity that is going on.

I tried to play a monitoring role by keeping in touch through regular meetings with the project's leaders and in November 1997 I undertook a monitoring process of the minutes of Directorate meetings to see how much activity on raising achievement was being undertaken. There was little evidence of any being specifically minuted. This concerned me greatly as not only was it a direct requirement of the Headteacher that this should be happening, but also it suggested that Directorates were not working with their Development Plans. This seemed to be an initiative that was failing. What could and should I do about it? I decided that I must take a positive step to reinvigorate the process.

The process and the effects of this action will be the start of a new series of actions and activities.

The first cycle of the improvement process – a summary

This cycle was initiated by the meeting in 1995 when planning for the improvement initiatives took place. By the spring term 1996 several initiatives were in place and development was taking place. The redundancy issue occurred in April 1997 and activity was reduced because of it. After my review and evaluation in November 1997 I had to re-plan my strategy and that of the school, and this brought an end to that cycle.

A slight change of research position

My appointment in April 1997 to Assistant Headteacher and Professional Development Manager posed an interesting position for me with regard to my research proposal. As an active participant, I now had to reconsider where this new role and my existing research question fitted together. After some reflection, it occurred to me that if I changed my research question slightly, I could continue in the same direction while making full use of my new activities in post. This was the start of another Action Research cycle for me. My original question has now changed from:

How can I help my school to raise the achievement of middle ability children?

To

How can I as the Professional Development Manager working with teachers, support and enhance the learning and achievement of middle ability pupils in a whole school improvement process?

After discussion with my supervisors, I refined the question even further to:

How can I as the Professional Development Manager working with teachers, support and enhance the learning and achievement of pupils in a whole school improvement process?

This slight change of emphasis allows me to take a more holistic overview of all developments and initiatives that are taking place in the school. The whole process continues as a series of Action Research spirals, which is central to the enquiry.

This chapter gives the framework within which the research is based. The next chapter will give an autobiographical account of me the teacher-researcher, outlining my values, beliefs and standards and validating them using Rudduck *et al's* (1996) concept of '*pupil voices*'.

Chapter 2 - An Autobiography

This chapter is autobiographical, and focuses on myself as the teacher – researcher. It surveys the academic and professional influences that have impacted on and influenced me as a person and as a teacher. My subjective value judgements are validated by the use of ‘pupil voices’. Many of the Action Research Cycles start and end here as I am trying to explicate my learning processes as I experience life. This chapter is central to the thesis. I suggest that all of my personal and professional life is influenced from the basis of the values, beliefs, standards and judgements that emerge in this chapter.

The concepts of ‘journeys’ and ‘wheels within wheels’ will run throughout the thesis and play an important part in my own imagery of how the components of my life and professional work interlock to enable me to form my living educational theory. Usher (1998:20) describes how such metaphors can be useful in describing the experiences I have had. He says:

For example, to tell the story of the self in terms of a journey of discovery is not simply to reflect (on) and accurately depict the literal journey of a life and by so doing reveal its meanings but rather to tell a story through a particular kind of modernist discourse, a culturally encoded meta-story. This provides a structure and a set of pre-defined meanings in the form for example, of certain metaphors (the ‘journey’), from which the story is constructed and a life is thereby emplotted and ‘presented’.

MacLure (1996:281) places ‘self’ at the centre of the action:

On the whole, in these life interviews, both interviewee and interviewer are engaged on a joint mission to explain. We act on a set of common assumptions: that a life story will be linear, directional, cumulative, coherent and developmental; that the past will help to explain the present (and not vice versa); that transitions are resolutions of boundary problems, and contradictions can be transcended; that the self is singular, discoverable through reflection, sits at the centre of our story and – though it may be pushed in different directions, or into somewhat different shapes, by external events – persists over time, and thus itself provides coherence to the narrative. And this is arguably the view of the self of the reflective practitioner, which underpins many versions of Action Research.

I feel that this establishes the place of ‘self’ in the Action Research process. It is only recently that researchers like Whitehead (1993) Eames (1995), Hughes (1996), Laidlaw (1997), and Holly (1997) have started to consider in depth the role teachers play in the process of education. It is the inner knowledge and the multitude of experiences that all

teachers have that contributes to the educative process. It is the teacher who encourages the pupil to undertake the learning process, acting as a facilitator, a motivator, a guide and a mentor. I would argue that unless the inner-self of the individual teacher is understood, analysed and documented then the teaching and learning process itself cannot be fully comprehended. It is the aim of this chapter to help the reader to understand the values, standards and beliefs that I hold, that guide my professional work and life, and the relationship that these have with the process of my learning and of raising achievement. I am combining this with the development of my personal living educational theory. I am looking for ways of representing what I bring to the education process. I am trying to write an account of how I, as an educator, represent the qualities I have and the values I hold.

It's me - an autobiography of my education

I write this educational autobiography as a result of a conversation with Jack Whitehead who during a meeting queried the origin of my own stance and motivation in education. I have a desire to prove to myself and I suspect to the world, so that I can rightly take a place academically in the society in which I find myself.

Usher (1998) is a keen advocate of the power that an autobiographical approach brings to research. He notes that in the processes of educational theorising, practice and research, the experiences of 'self' are a source of knowledge and a valuable pedagogic resource. It is therefore one of the methodological tools I will use to describe my practice during this thesis. If these experiences can be articulated in an appropriate format, they will serve to enhance, validate and contextualise applications of practice to the theoretical educational research base. Bruner (1984:7) succinctly states that:

A life is what actually happens. A life as experienced consists of the images, feelings, sentiments, desires, thoughts and meanings known to the person whose life it is.....a life as told, a life history, is a narrative, influenced by the cultural conventions of telling, by the audience, and by social context.

It is this articulation of self that I am attempting to make overt in this thesis. It is a major component of my developing living educational theory and the starting point from which my theory has developed. The autobiographical approach is gaining acceptance in the fields of educational research although it is not without some caveats. It is, if reported honestly, a record of the experiences and factors that have shaped the researcher's outlook and actions; the building blocks from which my living educational theory can be constructed. I say 'if reported honestly', because even if it is, the subjectivity of the

reporting process and the representativeness of the story is questioned by Usher (1998) who says:

The assumption that a life can be captured and represented in a text 'as it really is and was' has been increasingly questioned and it is now becoming fairly generally accepted that an autobiography is not immediately referential of a life, but is instead a work of artifice or fabrication that involves a re-constructing or 'presentation' (rather than a representation) of the self through the process of textual inscription.

It is a form of written code from which the real meanings may be drawn. The author of the autobiography has taken the experiences of life, interpreted them and then described them in text containing that internal interpretation. This concept is supported by Dalton (1993:6) who when writing about his own life story makes similar observations:

They are speculations and interpretations, which are grounded in private understandings and personal realities. These embody my belief that the experiential nature of the issues under analysis lend themselves particularly well to subjective interpretation. It is not the 'truth' but an impressionistic glimpse of a single segment of the life process which has been filtered through my own particular background, experiences, values and moral definitions.

Smith (1988:105) warns that:

Autobiography becomes a privileged form of ideological text where the demand that we should consist of coherent and recognisable subjects in relation to a particular knowledge is rationalised.

Care must be taken then and the warnings of Dalton and Smith heeded if autobiographies are to be used. Nevertheless I have chosen to use the approach as part of my thesis. To give more validity to the process, the autobiography must also contain the notion that autobiographies are to be read by others who in turn have their own forms of codes, pre-understandings, experiences and expectations. If the autobiography is read with the purpose of attempting to make sense of the 'human' behind the words, using the experiences of the reader to do that, then the autobiography becomes natural and meaningful. Another point to consider throughout this autobiographical narrative is that I will represent my life as a linear narrative. This is not the reality of life however. Ricoeur (1980) argues that life does not occur in such order, but in fact in chaos and flux, and it is only the writer of the story that re-orders these events into place, and allots emphasis and 'differential placement' upon those events.

Me the teacher-researcher

Michael Bosher started life in 1946 in a terraced house in Leicester. My parents were supportive and loving, and both my younger sister and myself had all the benefits of a

caring family life. My father was a working professional and my mother, a grammar school pupil did not pursue any formal qualifications and never throughout her married life worked in paid employment.

I attended the local Church of England one form entry Primary School in Leicester where an adequate education was delivered. The class size was in the low 30s. I started in the infant section at 5 years of age with the friendly Mrs Thomas as the class teacher, and I can still remember with affection some of the early memories of that class. The coke brazier in the classroom, the free milk every day, the orange juice, and the compulsory dose of Cod Liver Oil. In the afternoons, the compulsory sleep for all members of the class on portable beds erected in the Head Teacher's office.

As was tradition at the time, the teachers sat pupils in descending order of ability in the rows of desks, and I was always sitting in desks between position 15 and 20 throughout my primary career; a middle ability child in today's classification. At that time, the country was locked into the 11+ examinations. Although I cannot remember taking the various tests, I can remember with great clarity the day the result arrived. Both my parents were keen for me to pass so that I could go to the 'Grammar School', my father's Alma Mater. Etched in my memory is the hurt of failure, made worse by many of my friends being successful. Both of my parents though disappointed were very supportive, and have never to this day been anything other than encouraging.

Leicester City Education Authority at that time had a tripartite education system. There were Grammar Schools, Intermediate Schools and Secondary Modern Schools; the Intermediate School being the innovation of the time. These schools, there were three in the city, were designed to have an intake of pupils who just failed the 11+. That is, these schools had a narrow band of middle ability pupils. I was destined for one of these schools. The failure to win a place at the Grammar School has hurt me to this day primarily because I felt that I was as good academically as many of my friends who did pass the examination. I feel that much of my education and motivation to achieve since that time has unconsciously been driven by a need to prove my academic worth.

Life at the school was happy, and again I featured as middle ability, although when I had to make a choice of banding at Year 9, I chose the academic route. At that time in the school there were two parallel classes, one a technical class and one academic. As I had proved to

be less than adequate with my hands at practical activities, I chose the academic route. An important but poor decision that I made at this time was to drop the only foreign language on offer. I found it difficult and therefore opted for the easier route of History. This was a poor educational decision as at a later date I was debarred from a university education. At all British Universities in the early 1960s, a qualification in a foreign language was mandatory as part of their entry requirements. I was very poor at Mathematics, excellent at sport, and good at English. It took three attempts for me to pass the 'O' level G.C.E Mathematics examination, but I took the G.C.E 'O' level examination in English a year early and passed in what would now be Year 10. My sporting prowess led me to be elected captain of each year rugby team as I matured, and eventually captain of the school's First XV. In addition I was swimming captain, represented the county from the age of 12 at swimming, played cricket for the school and ran in cross-country matches.

At the age of 15 years, I had to make a choice for the next stage of my career. A few boys every year transferred to one of the local Grammar Schools as my school did not offer 6th form opportunities. I decided to take this opportunity and after a middle range performance at the G.C.E exams, I passed 6, I had sufficient qualifications to go to the Grammar School.

My time at the Grammar School again was happy, I took three subjects at 'A' level. I was appointed a prefect in Year 13 and again became First XV Rugby captain. I had now represented the Midland Counties at swimming. During my Year 13 I had the one mandatory careers interview with the careers master, and with my modest academic achievements to date and my abilities at sport, he counselled me away from an academic career with university aspirations towards a career in teaching. A reflection of the status of teaching at the time may be!

In 1964 with two 'A' passes and one additional 'O' level pass, I just failed my 'A' level Chemistry, I embarked on my teacher training at one of the premier Colleges of Physical Education in the country. A satisfactory three years here saw me graduate in 1967 with a Certificate in Education and a Diploma in Physical Education with distinction, a qualification gained for higher performance in examination.

My first post as a teacher of Physical Education was in Leicestershire and I was extremely happy and contented. By 1971, the Government was starting to make it very clear that they

were encouraging a thrust towards an all-graduate teaching profession. At the same time, the Open University opened its doors. It was advertised as the University of the Second Chance, and I like many other teachers saw it as an opportunity to improve my academic position in the profession. Three years of part time study at the same time as a full time job, bringing up a family of small children and teaching three evening classes a week to supplement my income brought the reward of a degree.

In 1975 I changed my job and was appointed as a Head of Department for Physical Education in a school in Wiltshire. Without doubt the possession of my degree helped as the advertisement for the job made the possession of a degree a major requirement.

Within a short time of appointment, I started to feel uneasy about my position. Conversations in the staff room made it very clear that in the opinion of many academic staff, PE teachers were all 'brawn and no brain'. This touched a sensitive part of me as I again felt that I was worthy of a better status than this. In order to rectify this, I took an opportunity offered by the LEA of enrolling for an Open University Advanced Diploma in Educational Management. Two years later I achieved this qualification and received promotion to become a Head of Year in the school.

I was now beginning to feel sensitive about the qualifications I held. The Open University was not in my eyes a true university like many of my colleagues had attended. I had worked extremely hard for what I had achieved, and was impressed with the academic rigour demanded by the organisation, but it was not a conventional university education. I had something in my psyche still to prove.

In 1989 the LEA offered the opportunity to undertake a part time, part taught course leading to a Masters Degree in Education. This I took, and three years later having completed the course, was awarded the degree in 1994 from Oxford University.

In January 1996 I made enquiries at Bath University to undertake a Doctor of Philosophy Degree. When asked to state the area of interest, I focused on the area of development in my present school that interested me the most, that of raising the achievement of middle ability children. With the luxury of hindsight, it is now clear that this interest is a deeply held identification with my own academic career, and a desire to help the next generation of middle achievers have an academically easier time in life than I had.

I have, on analysis, spent much of my adult life trying to compensate for my own inner perceived academic weaknesses. These are only internal voices and doubts however because at no time has anyone openly challenged my academic abilities. I have climbed the career tree to a satisfactory level, and I am engaged in a teaching post that I find immensely satisfying and challenging. In fact quite the reverse has happened, in Chapter 9 my present Headteacher compliments me on my academic ability and outlook.

I feel that I have still got to prove to my inner voice that the failed 11+ child can still achieve the highest qualification possible in academia. I await my success or failure in my venture with great interest.

My teaching philosophy

How and when did I start to develop a teaching philosophy? What influences in my life have contributed to the development of this philosophy? This moment of self-reflection and analysis has led me to the conclusion that the whole is the sum of the parts (MacLure, 1996). That is, the construct is an amalgam of several different personal strands of my life imposing upon and interacting with each other. At the present time I am of the opinion that my living educational theory is produced by, and continuing to be developed by the following influences:

- personality traits
- teaching experiences
- professional training
- trial and error management
- life
- observation of others in their professional roles
- interests outside of teaching
- academic research activities and academic theories
- my family, particularly my love of children and an excitement in their success
- my growth as I learn professionally and academically.

My teaching philosophy is a summation of those influences.

The tolerance for other people's children stems from the understanding of the difficulties your own children have experienced, and the step-by-step approach to the learning process comes as a direct experience of teaching your own children the basic skills of life.

Perhaps the most important factor of all is the understanding that all learners need clear guidelines to delineate the boundaries of behaviour. The consistent fair approach to problems and an overt statement of your principles and standards all contribute to the effective teaching and learning processes.

How can I articulate my teaching philosophy? All I can do is create a list of words and statements about the values I feel are important and that I strive to pass onto my pupils. In addition, these words help to describe the environment within which I would like learning to take place.

My values articulated

- in all aspects of my teaching I strive to be fair, just and consistent;
- to plan all work thoroughly so that it is accessible to all levels of ability in that particular group;
- to respect pupils and to recognise that as individuals they have individual needs and concerns;
- to work with confidence but humility;
- to have an open mind to all things;
- to understand that there is more than one approach;
- to understand that there is more than one point of view;
- to defend all people's rights to free speech and opinion within the parameters of accepted social behaviour;
- to create a forum where that opinion can be voiced;
- to care for people as individuals, and to value their contribution no matter how small;
- to work diligently and conscientiously;
- to smile and be encouraging as often as possible;
- to strive to motivate, support and encourage;
- to set and maintain high standards of personal behaviour;
- to work with pupils and staff to set achievable targets and goals;
- to encourage pupils to move from dependence to independence by helping them to acquire the appropriate skills to do that;
- to create a learning environment in which all pupils can achieve their maximum potential;

- to offer support and professional guidance where it is within my expertise, or to facilitate the resolution of the problem by others better qualified;
- to be courteous and kind and be prepared to assist others even if it is inconvenient to myself;
- to respect and value pupils and their views.

Embedded within these statements is the sum of my teaching philosophy. The list is neither definitive nor prescriptive but is the framework within which I work.

Having endeavoured to understand and articulate my inner thoughts and feelings, recorded my personality as I see it and outlined the development of my teaching philosophy, the next part in the jigsaw is to make some value judgements about how I relate and interact with others. The next pages of this chapter will indicate how I see the development of my educational philosophy as the synthesis of those influences. I will take each influence in turn and show how it has added a component to the end product.

My personality

Let me then create a very subjective pen portrait of my personality. It is always difficult to look into a mirror and see the truth. My construct must therefore be tested and validated by others, but I see myself in the following light. These personality traits are listed in no particular order, nor do they have the same strength of effect on actions I take, or lessons I learn.

I am, at the end of the analysis, a series of words and phrases but it is this that is the essence of me.

Personality traits

I am an easygoing placid individual with a calm outlook on life.

I get irritated if others do not conform to my way of thought and from that point of view could be accused of being selfish.

I am happy with my own company and am resourceful and able to use my initiative although not very practical with manual activities.

I am quite shy and not good at chatting although when I hide behind my professional persona I can be and am happy to be outgoing in public.

I am able to communicate effectively to individuals and groups and I get considerable pleasure from presentations that go well. I speak my mind to the point of being abrasive on occasions.

I have a set of opinions on most topics and am happy to defend my corner in an argument.
I analyse situations quickly and come to conclusions about the required course of action and bring those actions into force as a matter of urgency.

I manage time and actions well in terms of efficiency and I am irritated if others are late in the delivery of actions.

I am an energetic person who likes to get on with life and I enjoy reasonable levels of stress. I am at my most efficient with tight but attainable deadlines.

I am well organised and plan all my actions well ahead of time while at the same time being flexible should crises develop.

I can maintain an effective overview of several activities taking place at the same time.

I am weak at spelling and most mathematical skills.

I have a good general knowledge and an interested and enquiring mind.

I can produce well-written and clear documentation although I lack the artistic ability to make the best of the communication from a visual impact point of view.

I relate well to others, and I have good interpersonal skills.

As a manager, I am happy to take both decisions and responsibility, although I find some difficulty in the task of delegation.

I am reasonably sensitive to the views of others under a thin outer shell of strength and certainly sensitive to personal criticism.

I have a sense of humour.

I have less affinity for young children than I do for adolescents and older adults.

I care for the well being of others.

I do not get angry easily, but when roused tend to continue the dispute for longer than I should.

I anticipate many problems before they arise and take the necessary steps to avoid or at least lessen the problem.

I am not a particularly quick thinker and have only moderate intelligence.

I strongly dislike incompetence and indecision.

I am reasonably competitive, but not particularly career minded to the point of aggression.

I am happy to take an opportunity should it arise.

I am innovative and reasonably imaginative in my professional life.

I enjoy a high degree of personal health and well being.

I have a happy family life with which I am well contented, with a loving wife and two successful and loving children.

I have no financial worries, a wide circle of acquaintances and a few good friends.

I have interests outside of my job and I share some interests with my wife and some independently of her.

I am a pragmatist rather than a dreamer.

This list of personality characteristics is of crucial importance to my thesis as it is from this base that I intend to create the platform for my living educational theory. It is these values and beliefs embedded in my persona that have and will shape and develop my future action and resultant professionalism. It is more than this, it is the very inner soul that drives and moves me, and it is with passion that I feel the need to share these values and beliefs with others. While they are unique, there is a basis from which other teachers can build their own theories, but only if I share them.

To test the validity of my personality claims, I asked all of the pupils I teach what they could identify about me. It should be noted that at the time of this data collection, I only taught Yr.12 and Yr.13 students. This was not an ego trip, and I emphasised to all members of all groups that:

- their comments could be anonymous if they wished;
- that the data would only be used as a validation of my own personal statements;
- that they should if they could include a statement about how they perceived my teaching strategy, and then any comments or single words that they could use to describe any aspects of my personality they had observed.

I realise that I am asking them to undertake a difficult task. They may not be able to separate 'me' the teacher from 'me' the person. The reader will see from the responses that I do indeed get a mixture of both aspects.

Me as others see me

From the expressions on their faces they found this quite difficult to do and seemed to be a little embarrassed to do it. However, once they started, they seemed happy and able to undertake the task. Below are small selections of the comments reported verbatim using *italic* to show their words. The full record can be seen as Appendix 5.

Group 1 Year 12

Pupil A

Mr. Bosher is strict but kind. He explains things well and you can understand him. He is interesting. A great teacher.

Lucy

Professional, consistent, good at 'A' level because he uses images to convey complicated ideas. I'd say he is always interested and willing to talk and have a chat. He is the sort of teacher that if you don't do your work you feel you have let someone down because he has respect. Generally a very nice man, focussed in class, laid back yet on the ball.

Laura H

Your teaching style is serious, yet humorous. You are keen on class participation, which works well. You like people to have their own opinions. You're keen and talkative and want everyone to learn from everyone else. You are very fair with your reasoning and very supportive.

Group 2 Year 12

Anna

Mr. Boshier teaches in a clear and straightforward way. I find his teaching style to be direct and easy to understand. Mr. Boshier is fair, shows some strictness (I'm not sure that this is the way to describe it but what I am trying to say is that if you want us to do some work, we know we have to do it). He is helpful, understanding patient (willing to go over what he has said until everyone understands it.)

Pupil D

Clear concise teaching, explains things well. Fair but fairly strict on work. Understanding about problems both with academic issues, and problems outside the classroom.

Georgina

As a teacher, Mr. Boshier relates to the class very well. He uses examples that are common to the class to portray his explanation. He effectively dominates the class in order to gain full attention from the pupils. He is definitely one of the better teachers in the school as I am able to understand his teaching and he helps people who are less capable. Consistent, understanding and thorough. I feel that he is a fair teacher who commands respect from his pupils. He's very good at keeping the pressure on his students, which keeps us all attentive during his lessons. The way Mr. Boshier presents himself is good. He is very clear when explaining various topics. He is also encouraging

in the way he expects high grades from us all. He does however give criticism when needed, which is also good.

Year 13 Group

Pupil M

Teaching – constructive and structured with room to expand on points and ideas when difficulties are encountered. Focussed, has certain goals to meet in the lesson, helpful, thoughtful.

Pupil N

Involves everyone in class discussion. Strict and sometimes flexible with handing in work. Encouraging, good sense of humour, great amount of knowledge, teaches in a variety of skills, interactive, class discussions etc not just standing at the front talking all the time. Good ways to learn.

Having received these statements from the pupils, I am reminded of the power of the pupil voice. (Rudduck *et al*, 1996) are a strong advocate of ‘what pupils can tell us’, and I have received the benefit of that honesty in the preceding statements. I am pleased that the majority of statements highlight many of the characteristics that I have identified in myself. High standards and expectation, fair but firm, honest, good subject knowledge, willingness to help, use of imagery and every day activities to help understanding, sense of humour, respect for the individual, strict but approachable. These are some of the personality characteristics that have emerged and act as a powerful triangulation for me. A third point of independent reference will be presented in Chapter 9 where I have included the independent observations of my teaching from a fellow Ph.D researcher, and a character appraisal from the Headteacher of the school.

I now need to consider another component of my personality that has had and continues to have great influence on my personal and professional life and contributes to my living educational theory, the development of my teaching philosophy.

How I have developed a teaching philosophy is quite a difficult question. I see a teacher’s teaching philosophy as being the product of many influences as well as an integral part of the personal being. This section will show clearly the Action Research Cycles in operation as my teaching philosophy builds on my learning and is amended in the light of

experience. It is an example of my developing living educational theory showing the dynamic process developing and changing over time. Note the circles and cycles. Apart from personality, the process of teaching as an activity is another major source of inspiration for the philosophy forming process. The details of my teaching philosophy are seen as **Appendix 6**. If I were to summarise the development of my teaching philosophy at this point it would be that it has developed from my reflections on the many interactions with a variety of different people over the period of my life. This together with the hard experience through the trial and error of ‘getting it wrong’ and some professional training has given me my educational perspective and guided my practice.

A reflection

How do all of these influences help the formation of an educational philosophy? These values and actions are the very basis of it. The way each teacher lives and works is, I suggest, a direct mirror of the family values he or she holds. The respect and love for the children manifests itself in the classroom and the care and consideration for pupil problems are resolved, as one would for one’s own children. The standards one expects in a personal life cannot and should not be divorced from the professional life. The experiences incurred in the process of living must be reflected in actions, and these can be the strength of a personal living educational theory. If the analysis and reflection is accurate, if the truth is spoken and the actions are sincere then the knowledge of what has formed and guided those actions is crucial. If that can be passed onto future generations of teachers, then it is worthwhile recording one person’s contribution. My interpretation and analysis of my teaching philosophy is that I am true to who I think I am in relation to my values, standards and beliefs.

During my development I have achieved promotion on occasions and am now in a position of considerable influence in the school, a position where I can help both colleagues and pupils in the process of raising achievement. The whole process of both School Improvement and School Effectiveness is part of my job specification and this thesis is in part recognising my contribution to the whole school process.

To add further understanding to my own professional world, **Appendix 7** offers a dialogical account of the professional journeys I have, and am, undertaking in my quest to write my living educational theory. These journeys add to the picture of what constitutes ‘me’.

This chapter has been the starting point for my journey to the development of my living educational theory. It has considered the different facets that make up my persona and given an insight into how those different facets are interwoven into the complex that is 'me'. It has also set the scene for the way in which I use these different components as part of my role as Professional Development Manager to take my colleagues forwards in their own learning. To restate the thrust of the thesis again, I am proposing to research the way I learn so that I can and do help my colleagues and the pupils in the school to raise achievement. What influences I have had as a person on the teachers and the pupils is in part due to my personality and in part down to my professional training and experience in teaching. It is from this overall blend of factors and facets that my own personal living educational theory will emerge.

The next chapter will examine the various research methodologies that I have used to collect data, analyse my findings and suggest conclusions.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

This chapter confirms for the reader the choice of research method and methodologies used in this thesis. It engages with the definition of paradigm and particularly highlights the problems associated with epistemology. The synthesis of ideas from the fields of School Improvement, School Effectiveness and the Action Research paradigm are then discussed. It considers the advantages and disadvantages of various research methods and engages with the research literature. It is important to understand the rationale and the methodological basis for what is to follow in subsequent chapters in order that the true value of the data can be considered as being both valid and reliable.

This is an Action Research based enquiry of myself as an educator engaged in learning as I interact with colleagues and pupils in improvement activities in my school. Implicit within this is the need for me to show how my own living educational theory develops during the interactions, and how this emerging educational theory alters as the dynamics of all of the individuals in the process interact with each other. That is, I must try to explain what drives or motivates me during my own learning, and my professional activities of teaching and assisting others in the quest for improvement of the pupils in the school. A discussion of the theories of human motivation is beyond the remit of this thesis, but I recognise that there are a number of approaches to human motivation. Considering Murray's (1938) inventory of motives, he identified 28 '*psychogenic needs*' and 12 '*viscerogenic needs*'; I have made the decision to base my understanding of my personal motivation within the boundary of psychogenic needs. That is, to place my motivation in two of Murray's categories '*cognisance: the need to explore, ask questions, satisfy curiosity*', and '*exposition: the need to point and demonstrate; give information, explain and interpret*'. Hilgard *et al* (1971:316) discusses three possible approaches to the study of human motivation as *psychoanalytic theory*, *behaviour theory* and *cognitive theory*. Psychoanalytical theory is derived from a study of the interpretation of neurotic or irrational behaviour as developed by Freud. This does not apply to the conditions found in my thesis. Behaviour theory has its origins in the need-drive incentive interpretations developed in childhood. While I can recognise some foundations in my motivational drive come from my childhood as described in Chapter 2, overall I consider that my motivation for my interaction with others in the school is based on the cognitive theory. '*Cognitive theory focuses attention upon man's awareness of what is going on, his deliberate*

tendency to anticipate the future, to plan, to take risks' (Hilgard *et al*, 1971:317). Such an interpretation fits the concept of knowing what is wanted as an end product, knowing what is required to produce that end product and understanding what is required in terms of process to achieve the end product. The process then becomes purposeful and able to accommodate any problems encountered. My interpretation of myself under this framework calls on the early work of White (1959) whose research looked at the motivation of success and the avoidance of failure that gave people a sense of confidence. Building on this, Jung developed the notion of '*self-actualisation*' which he described as the '*development of full individuality with all parts of the personality somehow in harmony*' (Hilgard *et al*, 1971: 331). Maslow (1970) supported this notion and I am of the opinion that I fall into the category of a '*self-actualizer*'. It is this that has affected and influenced my own development as a teacher, my personality and my relationship with others has affected my interactions with others. Additionally, Action Research allows for the process of self-reflection which Leitch and Day (2000:189) identify as the '*engine for the Action Research process*'.

Early evaluation of the impact of such approaches to teacher reflection (Leitch 1993) has indicated that they not only provide the individual with opportunities for profound re-evaluation, but have also led frequently to powerful changes within the teacher's practices.

If such changes in practice can be facilitated then it is a justification for its use. There are two strands of research taking place in this thesis, my learning as I research for, and write, my Ph.D, and the research of my learning as I am undertake the role of 'participant observer' with my teacher colleagues during the school improvement initiatives. The methods used in both scenarios are outlined in this chapter. Data collection processes whether for a research degree or for use in a school based situation, remain the same. The need for objectivity and validity remain constant and overriding. The minimisation of bias, its recognition, and the process of triangulation will pervade as of prime importance throughout my work.

Subjectivity as an issue in single school research also needs consideration. I raise the problems of subjectivity and bias in the data, but would argue that in view of the fact that these issues are high profile in my methodology, their impact is reduced. By this I mean that subjectivity is high in my consciousness and forces a constant check on my actions and interpretations to validate and triangulate my work rigorously and regularly. One cannot totally eradicate bias and subjectivity and there is an argument for the value of

including such statements in a narrative. The danger is not recognising that this is happening. My narrative will indicate where such value judgements are made.

Data collection methodology

This will be presented in two sections. The first section will consider the values of quantitative and qualitative research together with the justification for adopting a mainly qualitative approach for the research study. Also in this section is the rationale for adopting the Action Research paradigm. In the second section an explanation and justification of the methods used for data gathering are discussed together with the difficulties that I encountered when writing the thesis.

Throughout the thesis, the correct names of the school, the pupils, and staff have been intentionally recorded where they have given permission. At other times during the narrative I have used initials. There is a school of research which requires all names to be anonymised, but under the mantle of academic freedom, using 'real' names in an educational research thesis is legitimised. However, because I have not managed to gain permission from all respondents, or they have asked to be anonymised, or the data is somewhat controversial, I have opted for a cautious approach. I have nothing to hide in this thesis, and all that is written is, in my subjective value judgement, a true and honest account of the situations and conditions that prevailed at the time of writing. However, some of the activities and strategies recorded, and some of my colleagues included in the narrative have criticism attached to them. In order to eliminate unpleasantness or censure for the inclusion of this data, I have opted for the anonymous application where I considered this appropriate. I have conformed to the codes of research conduct as laid down by the British Sociological Society's (1973) '*Statement of Ethical Principles and their Application to Sociological Practice*' as the teacher researcher in this thesis. On all occasions I established and reiterated with the individuals concerned the outcomes of the research and respected their wishes in terms of their involvement.

The use of the first person 'I' in the narrative is again a controversial area in academic research. Traditionally, theses have been written in the third person. To place 'I' in theoretical context, Whitehead (1998a: 3) used Polanyi (1958) as his standpoint. He said: '*Polanyi explained the basis of personal knowledge in terms of a decision to understand the world from one's own point of view as an individual claiming originality and exercising judgement, responsibly*'.

He goes on to argue that the inclusion of 'I' in the methodology is vitally important because it is a 'living contradiction', (Whitehead, 1996:12). He argues that:

It establishes a dialectical base rather than a propositional base to the educational knowledge being created. The idea of existing as a living contradiction, within one's practical and theoretical knowledge has been found useful by many teachers as they identify a tension in their practice when they hold together the experience of holding certain values and the experience of their denial in practice.

It is a very satisfactory way of explaining what is occurring. That is, in our teacher education we are imbued with certain operational and theoretical perspectives from which we then work. The concept of 'I' in that day-to-day experience may conflict with these externally imposed precepts, and the 'I' gives certain validity to the activity because it is happening here and now, not a theoretical application in the abstract. To that end, 'I' is the most satisfactory basis from which a 'claim to know' can be argued. Eames (1997) supports this philosophy by suggesting that by inquiring into the educational process in his own classroom using an Action Research based approach moving through a reflective change cycle, he is developing and adding to 'knowledge about education'. Eames (1997:38) notes that:

It is educational because not only is it constituted from an educational process, but because through methodological enquiry I am moving to a more conscious understanding of my practice as a teacher.

Eames (1995) goes on to place dialectical dialogue as a vehicle for conveying professional learning and knowledge to others as opposed to the more oft used format of the propositional approach. His argument is that the dialectical form is more powerful because the concepts formulated are the result of discussion and argument. They will have been challenged during the process, and will continue to be challenged consequently, but the dialectical process will create a wider understanding and agreement. Propositional theories come from the individual but remain to be challenged by the academy. I will pick this theme up again in Chapter 9.

Qualitative researchers like Wolcott (1990) are adamant that the first person style is the more appropriate form of notation for educational research. This is supported by Hitchcock and Hughes (1995:338) who say:

Many qualitative researchers argue strongly for the use of the first person. The extent to which the prospective researcher is able to achieve this is a moot point since the prevailing norm is to adhere to a neutral stance which will inevitably require the use of the third person. However, apart from being singularly unexciting this method of reporting research may in fact be distorting the very

realities it is claiming to represent. Since qualitative researchers take the representation and re-construction of social reality very seriously the use of the first person narrative style may not only be justifiable, but essential.

I too support the first person narrative. It makes the communication process between the writer and the reader more readable and stimulating by giving it the personal touch. The idiosyncrasies of a person's vocabulary, the colour of the metaphors and the imagery created are powerful tools in the description of the data. The counter argument of objectivity of the report must of course be considered, but I stress again that if it is high on the list of priorities for the writer, then in my opinion, the style is justified and is a legitimate form of notation.

The argument goes further than this however, because it is also connected to the very process of the research itself. It revolves around the concept of researching 'with' and researching 'on'. While some of the data collection in this thesis is concerned with researching 'on', much of the process is researching 'with'. That is to say, myself as the participant researcher is part of the process. I am part of the Action Research Cycles and also an integral part of many of the initiatives and strategies recorded and commented upon. To this end, I think it quite legitimate that I should record my part in the process as 'I' as I am researching with both the students and my other teaching colleagues. This concept also allows me to use real names where applicable because the individual is part of the research and not the object of scrutiny from a distance. The individuals concerned must be aware of the process as both they and I are intimately involved in it. It could be argued that research 'on' can be carried out secretly and from a distance and in such a case the subjects of that research have less opportunity to defend or reply to the narrative written. By researching 'on', I mean that I have taken an initiative, for instance the Yr. 11 Mentoring Initiative recorded in Chapter 7 and taken an objective view of the process. I have recorded the student voices and the comments from teaching staff as a dispassionate observer. In this case, the third person is legitimately used.

The use of literature

I have made a decision to review research literature throughout the thesis as an ongoing process. In this way I can keep the thesis as current as possible with research developments in the fields I am engaged with. I have decided to do this because I feel that a strongly supported argument based on research facts from within the school and argued or counter argued by the literature at that point makes a more convincing and immediate impact. This

is more powerful and convincing to my mind than an isolated inclusion of a research literature review at the start of the thesis. Additionally, it overcomes one of the problems of a stereotypical literature review. That is, a review often conducted at an early stage in the research process in order to focus down the research area and fine-tune the research question. Once this work has been completed, however, there is a danger that more recent work may be overlooked or not included, as there has to be a 'cut-off point' to this type of presentation. Currency is of particular importance in an Action Research process where new cycles of events and actions stimulate new avenues for literature inclusion. This approach has also underpinned the research tools used and the techniques used for data collection. Literature is an integral part of the research process, and the origin of the quotations is located in the references at the end of the thesis. Any quotations taken from literature are indented in italicised, bold, indented text if of a substantial nature, and within the lines of the text if only a few words. Specific concepts, phrases or ideas attributed to a researcher are identified within the body of the text in italicised format together with the author and the page reference number.

Part 1. Approaches to Educational Research

An epistemological consideration

A major difficulty I experienced throughout the research process, and the writing of the thesis is an appropriate epistemology to adequately frame the research, describe my feelings, explain how the various factors within the research interlock and are related to each other. Superimposed upon these difficulties is the academic standpoint of trying to use conventional epistemology to describe a new approach. Some major educational organisations like the Teacher Training Agency, British Educational Research Association the American Educational Research Association together with respected academics like Stoll, Lomax, Zeichner and Schön have all made it clear through their research that the teacher researcher is now becoming recognised as an important source of educational research. To that end, a new form of epistemology is required to explain and describe what they, the researchers, are finding, thinking and doing. Schön (1995) was the instigator of the movement when he recognised that '*the new scholarship requires a new epistemology*'. To understand the research processes involved in this thesis, it is necessary to define the terminology used.

Research method

Methods in research are ways or techniques of going about the process collecting data. *'Methods can be likened to the way that tools are used in a particular activity'* (Cantrell, 1993). They may involve listening to people, examining documents or watching what people do.

Research methodology

This is an analysis of how the research process should operate. A methodology *'is a broad array of ideas, frameworks, concepts and theories which surround the use of various methods or techniques employed to generate data'* (Hitchcock and Hughes 1989:20) or a *'philosophical framework which guides research activity'* (Van Manen 1990). Kaplan (1964) goes on to point out that methodology is a description or a justification of the processes, but not the methods of data collection themselves. The process of actually collecting data using such tools as interviews, observation or questionnaires sits within a specific methodology, and for this thesis the majority of the methodological choice has been qualitative. Some quantitative data has been used, and I have combined the two methodologies into a grand narrative. The methodologies are then located within the parameters of the Action Research paradigm although I put forward the argument that some readers may consider my work to have transcended the boundaries of this paradigm.

Positivistic v qualitative research

What follows is a discussion about the merits of different approaches to social research. I had to make a decision when constructing the methodology for the thesis about which model of research method to adopt. Methods of undertaking educational research have varied over the last thirty years and Burgess (1985:1) makes this observation:

The last decade has witnessed several changes in the scale, substance, style and strategy of social and educational research. In a field that was at one time dominated by talk of indicators, variables and measurements, by the use of surveys and quantitative techniques, some space has been cleared for qualitative research. Nevertheless, the term 'Qualitative Methods' has been used to cover approaches that are claimed to be 'soft' and 'non vigorous' compared with the 'hard', objective, 'vigorous' approaches that are referred to as quantitative methods.

Since 1983 there has been a shift toward qualitative research. What convinced the researchers in the last quarter of the C20th that educational research could be better suited by a more qualitative rather than positivistic approach?

Positivist scientific research

Prior to the more ready acceptance by many educational researchers of the qualitative approach, much of the educational research undertaken involved the statistical sampling of large numbers of participants, testing against well formulated scientific strategies and the application of data to pre-determined ideas and hypotheses this was known as the positivistic model. This involved the concept of empiricism whereby the only 'truth' could be that which was gained from direct observation by a series of controlled experimental situations. Objectivity can only be achieved by employing a controlled experimental approach followed by the collection of large amounts of data to support the statements made. The difficulty in educational research is that there are some key assumptions made about that human behaviour within the social setting. Firstly, from the behavioural psychologists' standpoint human behaviour is caused by and subject to internal forces. There has to be recognition here that this internal conditioning response is sometimes the result of external forces impacting on that behaviour. From the sociologists' point of view, human behaviour is subject to and caused by external forces. Secondly these forces can be identified observed and measured. Again this generalisation has to be tempered by a consideration of Habermas. His 'sociology' did not assume measurement, as sociologists of his genre who are influenced by phenomenology focus on intentionality rather than causality. If the causality rather than intentionality focus is adopted the argument for the model continued with the idea that providing these measures can be identified, observed and measured then actions can be predicted. That is that '*causality*' (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1989: 22) can be attributed. Moving from this standpoint, two principles of social research developed. Those of '*deductive reasoning*' and '*falsifiability*' (Popper, 1959) and these became a benchmark of the positivistic or scientific method. Thus with the application of the deductive reasoning principle, it was possible to move from this point to the position where general statements of fact could become specific statements which could be objective and independent of experience. Popper (1959) was a keen proponent of the concept that theories and explanations of them could not be regarded as scientific unless they were '*falsifiable*' i.e. they are testable. If these theories or concepts do not meet this criterion then they have to be disregarded. This Positivistic Scientific approach while clearly having a place in any research methodology also has its disadvantages and has provided over the years an arena for vigorous debate between researchers trying to find an appropriate methodology for their research. In its simplistic form the concept of 'if 'this' happens then 'that' will follow' is a very rigid frame within which to work. My view is that educational research with all of the vagaries, uncertainties and discontinuities found in a

complex organisation like a school cannot be fully accounted for by this methodology on its own. I do not condemn the approach as I use quantifiable data as part of my own data. Indeed, one of the features I wish to highlight is the fact that during the research I have incorporated a number of different methods of data collection. I have used them within my methodology, but this approach does not give me the total flexibility I need to fully describe and explain my actions and those of others.

A disadvantage of this approach is that it is difficult to control, as detailed specification of all the factors involved in the research need to be identified and outlined. The control of these factors is very difficult in the educational environment. Unless this control can be applied however, data becomes less reliable. In addition, while this type of research is suitable for large-scale research studies, where generalisations can be made, it is less suitable for the smaller school based investigation. It is impractical in terms of the time and resources for research within the school where sample size is small and the overall scale of the research reduced. Material from the Westminster College M.Ed. course (Prosser 1991), when discussing quantitative methods states;

The feasibility of utilising such methods in a school is at least questionable, and even if it were possible we would still be faced with the fact that our sample of children is unrepresentative of children as a whole, so that our conclusion, at best, could only refer to the particular experimental groups. Whether conclusions would relate to next year's intake would be equally questionable.

Quantitative or positivistic research does not fully allow for the flexibility of approach often required in sociological or educational research, nor does it allow for attention to small but important details that the qualitative style of research would allow.

Qualitative research

If the quantitative or positivistic approach to research does not entirely fulfil the requirements as a methodological approach, then what alternatives are there? What is required is a methodology that would facilitate educational research. Before a piece of educational research is undertaken, careful consideration must be given to the intended outcome. Burgess (1985:3) noted;

Zelditch (1962) indicated that researchers need to ask themselves what kinds of methods are relevant for the particular topic under investigation? What kinds of information are relevant? How can the methods used be evaluated? Zelditch suggests that these questions can be addressed by considering the 'efficiency' and informational adequacy of the particular methods in gathering data.

Zelditch goes on to discuss the suitability of the quantitative versus qualitative approach to research depending on the intended outcome required. The original work on the Qualitative Methodology approach was initiated in the region of 40 years ago much of it in America, and in the next two decades Adelman *et al* (1977) in particular were active in research and publication in this field. Bulmer, Ebbutt, Shipman, Finch and many more experienced researchers in the educational field also supported the qualitative approach.

Recent educational research leads to the idea that qualitative research fits the educational world more appropriately than quantitative. For instance, the strategies used for this type of research reflect the styles and approaches adopted by researchers such as Walker and Wiedel (1985), and Stenhouse (1984). These researchers have all used strategies that are considered as qualitative in their work. Burgess (1985:6) helped with the definition:

The term 'qualitative methods' is therefore used to refer to a range of research and writing. Some writers have used other terms to refer to some aspects of qualitative methods. Among the most common terms used to refer to particular strategies are fieldwork, field research, ethnography, case study and interpretative procedures. Each of these terms covers an element of qualitative method and indeed there is some overlap involved.

More recent work has continued to divide and subdivide the approach into different groupings, which required the use of a variety of different epistemologies. The need for a new epistemology to accommodate these new forms of scholarship was recognised by Schön (1995) and will be discussed later. Jacob (1987) identified six of what she referred to as 'traditions'. They were human ethnology; ecological psychology; holistic ethnography; cognitive anthropology; ethnography of communication and symbolic interactionism within the scope of a qualitative methodology making it more than one single clearly defined approach. She wanted to make it an easier task to collect and manipulate from qualitative research. There were critics of her 'traditions' concept such as Atkinson, Delamont and Hammersley (1988) who felt that she had neglected the work of British researchers in this field. Guba and Lincoln (1985) suggested eight different terms that they formed into what they referred to as a '*naturalistic paradigm*', qualitative research being just one of their differentiated approaches to the collection of social data. They used such terms as post-positivist; ethnographic; phenomenological; subjective; case study; qualitative; hermeneutic and humanistic. What has become clear to me is that the division between the quantitative and qualitative boundaries are not clearly defined; the tools of description are not available to fully convey the linguistic meaning within the complex worlds of educational research. The work of Denzin and Lincoln (1994:3) has made an attempt to more clearly define the scope, nature and variety of qualitative research

by recognising its multiplicity both in its approaches and practices. They make the point that:

Qualitative research, as a set of interpretative practices, privileges no single methodology over another. As a site of discussion, or discourse, qualitative research is difficult to define clearly. It has no theory, or paradigm, that is distinctly its own.....Qualitative research is used in many separate disciplines it does not belong to a single discipline. Nor does qualitative research have a distinct set of methods that are entirely its own. Qualitative researchers use semiotics, narrative, content, discourse, archival and phonemic analysis, even statistics. They also draw upon and utilise the approaches, methods, and techniques of ethnomethodology, phenomenology, hermeneutics, feminism, rhizomatics, deconstructionism, ethnographies, interviews, psychoanalysis, cultural studies, survey research and participant observation, among others.

What seems to me to be important is that the data, collected by whatever method, and using whatever methodology has to be able to pass the rigorous test of authenticity to fellow educators, and the test of validity for the academic world. I have used a number of methods of data collection in my thesis and the appeal of the qualitative approach is that the profile of the strategies involved suits the area of research for this study. Burgess (1985:9) identified the features of:

***The researcher working in a natural setting.
Studies may be designed and redesigned.
The research is concerned with social processes and with meaning.
Data collection and data analysis occurs simultaneously.***

To take the discussion further I identify with the hermeneutic tradition of interpretivism. This is a post positivistic approach where the researcher is trying to make sense of what is being discovered and construct an interpreted view of the world from the data. The paradigm of constructivism used by Piaget for example to help individuals construct their own meaning was an important step to be taken in the world of educational research. What I am trying to do in my thesis is to make sense of my learning, and the way that has impacted upon and affected both my colleges and the pupils in my school. The approach of Phenomenology associated initially with the philosopher Husserl (1965) must not be disregarded here. Phenomenology is defined by Hitchcock and Hughes (1995:176) as:

..a philosophical position concerned to describe the phenomena of consciousness, that is the foundations of our common sense taken-for-granted assumptions about the social world.

It is important as part of the interpretivist point of view that the philosophical analysis of actions and thoughts is not overlooked. The formation of theories and explanations by suspending belief in the world allows for the abandonment of prejudgement and

preconceptions. In Husserl's (1965) terms it allows for nothing to be '*taken as given*'. This is an advantage when analysing any data collected. Such data is released from the fetters of conventional thinking and therefore non-stereotypical descriptions and explanations are possible. What it does do is demand the rigor of authenticity and validity. To develop theoretical explanations is helpful, but the next stage of applying those theoretical and philosophical notions to the 'real world' is essential for the wider acceptance of the theory. To achieve this, any explanation or description has to be submitted to the scrutiny of others in an open debate. The strength of a dialectical conversation allows for opposition, argument, refinement and adjustment to the philosophical theories produced, and the outcome gives the seal of authenticity to an argument that has stood up to that public scrutiny. In order to do that, I have collected primary data, and then interpreted what I have found in order to make intellectual explanations. From this position the next stage of the Action Research cycle is initiated. Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) identifies that the hermeneutic tradition developed in the 19th century and is particularly associated with Droysen and Dilthey. It developed initially as a counter to the positivism approach. The positivists argued for the continuity of scientific study of nature to flow into social research. Dilthey argued the fact that '*the subjective, meaningful character of human conduct had no counterpart in nature*' (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995:227). He therefore wanted to differentiate between the science of the natural world and the science of the human world. Hammersley (1990:9 – 43) wanted to make the distinction:

that the natural sciences will develop causal explanations for the 'outer events' which are essentially meaningless phenomena; the human sciences on the other hand, are concerned with the 'inner' understanding of meaningful conduct, that is with human action as opposed to movement.

He did also however wish to make these social studies as empirical as possible while maintaining the idealistic side of his work and this led to tensions then which still exist today. This tension manifests itself in the concern expressed about the value that some researchers have placed on the quality of the outcomes of qualitative research, and also about the validity of such research. From the field of environmental education, researchers like Chapple and Rogers (1998:556) have levelled the criticism that such research is '*a soft option, lacking scientific rigour, open to possible bias or even fraud, and a form of research unsuited to evidence based practice*'. Sandelowski (1986, 1993), Secker *et al*, (1995) and Clarke (1992) have identified deficiencies as perceived by them of the approach found during their research into aspects of nursing. Such deficiencies as sampling, reliability and attribution of meaning given to statements by interviewees were cited. A response from Smith-Sebasto (2000) encapsulates the problem in stating that one

of the greatest problems found in evaluating the quality of work from this approach is *'the lack of generally accepted criteria'*. To help in this evaluative process, researchers like Elder and Miller (1995), and Gough and Reid (2000) have produced a series of guidelines, tables or sets of standards whereby qualitative research can be judged. For such a methodology to have creditability a robust response such as this was required. With this acceptance from the academic research community, it seems acceptable to me that this thesis should undertake qualitative research. I am forced into the position of making the choice between the positivistic and qualitative methodologies. Taking the ever present pressure of time for data collection, small sample size which is not statistically significant, a dynamic and ever changing scenario within the research area together with the fragmented rather than linear distribution of research data, it all indicates to me that qualitative rather than quantitative methods are more appropriate to this study. To summarise my thoughts I quote Griffiths and Davis (1993:45):

The model of research that was used in this project is 'Action Research'. This method of research is usefully distinguished from a range of other kinds of social science research by its emphasis on action. It is different from 'positivist' research, which uses the physical sciences as a model. Action Research is not trying to identify large-scale causal laws. Instead it focuses on the rigorous examination of a single situation, using knowledge drawn from experience and research findings to illuminate it, in order to improve it.

Research approaches - some considerations

Having made the decision that qualitative rather than quantitative research is the most appropriate for this study, the next decision was to decide on the approach to be adopted. As stated earlier, within the qualitative research approach there are several methods of collecting data. In reviewing the *'naturalistic paradigms'* epistemology mentioned earlier of Guba and Lincoln (1985) there are a number of paradigms from which to choose. To selectively take from the list of post-positivist; ethnographic; phenomenological; subjective; case study; qualitative; hermeneutic and humanistic leaves a number of options open. Appreciating the *'multiple methodologies'* concept (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994) seems to be an acceptable way of bringing together a synthesis of all the different forms of data and varieties of narrative used in the thesis. I propose therefore to utilise several methods under the umbrella of qualitative methodology.

Living Educational Theory and theorising

To help the reader make sense of what is to follow, I need to clarify exactly what is meant by the concept of a living educational theory. In 1963, the Ministry for Education under the chair of J. Newsom produced a report from the Central Advisory Council for Education

entitled *Half our Future*. In this report, Newsom (1963:98), chapter 12 has a sub heading entitled '*The Teachers Needed*', and the opening quotation from this chapter reads:

Whatever happens in the schools depends on the men and women who staff them. Imaginative accommodation, modern equipment, skilful organisation, a determined attack on social and economic handicaps – all of these are necessary to progress, but the key figure remains the teacher. This fact is confirmed again and again by the remarkable achievements of some schools in the most adverse conditions, and by the evidence that boys' and girls' behaviour, confidence and attitude to work can all be shaped by successful relations with individual teachers: what ultimately counts is a person.

If it is accepted that the teacher is central to the development of each pupil, and is a facilitator in the educational process, then to understand what drives, influences, motivates and moulds a teacher's thinking is paramount in the total concept of understanding the processes that we know as education. This understanding will help to shape the thinking of new teachers; existing teachers who wish to understand their own practice in their quest for improvement and perhaps primarily the learning process of the pupils. To help to understand and interpret what a teacher does, thinks and says, is the reason I have to create my living educational theory. It will be the explication of that theory as I describe and explain my work as a teacher that will make clearer the interpretation process.

A starting point for the discussion is a consideration of what I mean by theory in this thesis. There is a difficulty here as there are a number of different definitions each attached to its own philosophical standpoint. Kaplan (1964:18-23) defines theory as: '*a statement that purports to explain, or predict something on the basis of relevant values, beliefs, motives and the like*'. The fact that he includes the word statement within his definition leads me to believe that he is from the positivistic research paradigm. The positivistic or '*normative researcher*' (Cohen and Manion 1981:25) tries to devise general theories of behaviour and then tries to validate them through empirical means. The normative researcher is looking for a way in which the world may be understood, and to try and account for, and provide a rationale for, human and social behaviour. While I have used some empirical data within the thesis from which analysis is made, conclusions drawn and changes made, I cannot stand alongside this definition, as it is too constraining and fixed. I identify much more with the interpretivist approach to the definition. An interpretivist researcher looks from a different perspective. He begins with the individual and tries to understand his interpretation of the world around him. As a consequence, theory emerges from the situations around him, and has to be '*grounded*' in the research data, theory does not precede the data, it follows it. The analysis of the data then has the researcher's own

meanings and understandings attached to it. What is important is that the theory that resulted from that process must make sense to the people to whom it applies. For the interpretivist researcher, it is how the attachment of meaning occurs in one place at one time, and how this might compare with other situations in other places and at other times. Hopkins (1993:71) goes a step further in his attempt to understand and define theory. He claims that theory can be looked at in two '*senses*'. The first is the individual sense where theory '*refers to a set of personal assumptions, beliefs or presumptions that individuals hold*'. If this interpretation is taken, then the individual is making a construction of his world and of reality and it is by definition therefore essentially theoretical. Hopkins's second '*sense*' or interpretation of the word is to describe what he calls the traditional or '*grand theory*', '*a coherent set of assumptions which purport to explain, predict and be used as a guide to practice*' (Hopkins, 1993:72). The difficulty with this second interpretation when applied to education is that in educational theory, prediction is not always of use in the classroom. On many occasions, research has found that the gap between theory of education, and practice of teaching in the classroom has been too large preventing any useful connections being made. Both Pring (1978) and Stenhouse (1979) have both noted this from their research. Hopkins (1993:72) suggests that the reason for this is that '*the theories are often not specific enough, or the propositions they contain are not easily generalisable to individual situations*'. A way round this Hopkins suggests, is to undertake the process of theorising. Kaplan (1964:18-23) says '*theorising is the method by which theory is generated, reviewed and renewed. The dialectic between theory and practice is important, but that between theorising and practice more so*'. There are two points for discussion here; the first is the position of theorising. In the '*grand theory*' approach, theory precedes practice. In the theorising approach, practice precedes theory. As a result of data collection from the classroom, teachers then theorise on its meanings for them and their colleagues. They engage in a critical evaluation of the data, construct a hypothesis or plan and then implement that plan with a view to improvement. They become in Schön's (1983) terms, '*reflective practitioners*' and in Pring's (1978) terms engaged in the process of '*educational theorising*'. Within this process, they control the knowledge they are discovering, not letting it control them, and they are also part of the process '*discovering self-knowledge*' (Hopkins, 1993:72). This concept of self knowledge is important to the individual as it not only allows them to understand their world, it also empowers them to use that knowledge in both their personal lives and their professional lives as practising teachers. Hopkins (1993) relates this to Polanyi's (1962) '*personal knowledge*' the concept of '*tacit knowledge*' which is

developed through '*subjective experience and owned by the individual*', (Hopkins, 1993:72). The second point is that the dialectical approach between theorising and practice is for me a central part of the research in my thesis.

To locate my position regarding theory and theorising, I claim a third variation of the process. For me, reflecting on practice in the classroom followed by dialectic with other educators on the interpretation and meanings construed from the data produces educational theory. Many teachers undertake this process of theorising and of educational theory production as part of their professional life. I wish to add to Hopkins' (1993) sense of the word theory because I wish to imprint my own values, belief and assumptions onto that educational theory. That is to make this general concept of tacit and personal knowledge personal by recognising that it is embedded in my own practise together with my values, standards and beliefs. To me this will make the educational theory mine, a personal contribution to the educational knowledge base of practice formed from research data in the classroom. It is then reflected upon by myself and followed by dialectical interchanges with colleagues.

This activity is in essence the development of a living educational theory. The living part of the description is developed from the concept that my personal educational theory is changing over time. As I experience life, undertake my professional duties, change and modify other teachers and my own practices, then the theory changes. It is this dynamic that makes it both personal and living. It is developing from the bottom up, me, working with my colleagues and pupils, rather than having theory imposed externally down.

Educational theory was in the 1950s, 60s and 70s theoretically based. Piaget (1967), Vygotsky (1978) and Hirst and Peters (1970) for instance all created sound, philosophical and intellectual but 'abstract' theory about the processes involved in teaching and the education of children. They do however seem distant and divorced from the reality of the classroom. What I am doing is taking these theories developed outside of the classroom and building on them by focussing on the educational practices of both teaching and learning through that cauldron of development, classroom interactions. I hope by researching with pupils and teachers in the classroom that the outcome will be validated by practice. I propose to develop educational theories with the values that I hold, and the thinking that I do, as I carry out my everyday practice as a teacher. By philosophical abstract theory I am referring to theories propounded by academic researchers and

developed by experimentalists in education. They were well meant, but lacked the pragmatism of classroom application. I felt at the time, and have been convinced since that many theories of how children learn are acceptable as a theoretical exercise, but often do not explain the reality of the classroom. Real children with real but incredibly different and often conflicting needs defy the neat solution of the academic theorist and indeed the imposition of political remedies. Eames (1995: Chapter 9 p. 2) offered a strong critique to such an approach in his thesis on his own educational theory:

I've grown more and more aware of the need for me to write something and finish this phase of my research, for what's happening to education, to teachers, and to pupils has been outrageous, in denying of teachers' professionalism, and the imposition of particular learning theories on pupils for reasons of politics and prejudice rather than anything remotely educational.

While I in essence support his fervour and enthusiasm for the teacher researcher, I attenuate my feelings. I would like to consider the addition of the teacher researcher's work to the existing knowledge base, not dismiss all other forms of research as invalid. What children need is the opportunity of education delivered where they are at the time that they need it. By this I mean giving the teacher the professional opportunity to judge at any moment in time the most appropriate format, level and area of knowledge needed to take the individual or class forward. To be able to do this without the restriction of rigidity imposed by confining syllabi or programmes of study. The teacher in the classroom at that time is in perhaps the best situation to judge the appropriateness of any particular approach. Teachers are constantly forming and adapting existing educational theory, and I am arguing for the freedom to do this. It is for this reason that I wish to add to abstract philosophical educational theory by supporting the current educational research emphasis of the teacher researcher in the classroom. I am one such practising teacher, and my living educational theory will be the unique mix of my experiences, my set of rules and levels of my understanding. They will also include an understanding of my own learning processes, my theoretical knowledge of education, research and of the practice of teaching. It is this amalgam that I will call my living educational theory. Eames (1995: Chapter 9 p. 44) presents the picture I wish to support and create in the rest of this thesis.

The contribution should be personal rather than impersonal. They should try to root claims to knowledge in the writer's own experiences, to show how the writer has been 'educated', has changed as a result of the action and experiences described. They should involve some element of narrative as well as reflection; the personal growth of the writer – how she/ he came to his/ her present understanding is central.

The philosophical is then created from the practical. In the creation of my own living educational theory, I give an explanation and description of my learning as I try to improve my practice. I have tried to evaluate what I do in the present by looking at the past and at the same time I am trying to create something that is not yet in existence by projecting myself into the future.

The Action Research Paradigm

An academic tension

There is a tension in describing the position of Action Research. For some the appropriate label to give Action Research is that of a method, another tool for collecting data. For others, its status is raised to that of a methodology. For me the more accurate term is paradigm. I have come to this conclusion because I consider it to be more than just another tool for collecting data and under the definition of methodology described earlier it is more than a philosophical framework within which different methods of data collection are used. If paradigm is the descriptive term to be used, then a definition of 'paradigm' must be established. Capra, quoted in Milbrath (1989:116) defined a paradigm as:

[A paradigm or worldview] is a constellation of concepts, values, perceptions, and practices shared by a community, which forms a particular vision of reality and a collective mood, that is the basis of the way the community organises itself.

This is a much wider concept than that of research method. It is more than a tool, and wider than that of a methodology. It contains the vision of reality and makes a statement about the way that subscribers to that definition consider and view the concept of reality. I am happy to be associated with this definition. Anderson and Herr (1999) see Action Research as being outside those of the normal paradigms accepted by the positivist, the interpretivist and the critical theorist as discussed by Gage (1989). Outside because it requires a new epistemology, which is in conflict with the technical rationality of the university norms, associated with positivist's, the interpretivist's and the critical theorist's paradigms. In addition to this interpretative approach, there is the critical theorist model. This model was created at Deakin University in Australia by researchers like Kemmis (1983), Carr and Kemmis (1986) and Kemmis and McTaggart (1988). The basis of this model of the paradigm is that of '*critical enquiry*' which enables teachers to search for meanings that educational action has for them, and bring about effective resolution to classroom and school problems by reflection, action and reaction. Gibson (1986:5-6) describes the characteristics of Critical Theory:

Critical theory acknowledges the sense of frustration and powerlessness that many feel as they see their personal destinies out of their control, and in the

hands of (often unknown) others....Critical theory attempts to reveal those factors which prevent groups and individuals taking control of, or even influencing, those decisions which crucially affect their lives...In the exploration of the nature and limits of power, authority and freedom, critical theory claims to afford insight into how greater degrees of autonomy could be available.

While this appears to be emancipatory in its outlook, there are some problems with its assertions that it can change the inequalities of the world. I want to use an emancipated but softer approach that will allow me by observation and dialectic to establish the position of the pupil, the teacher and the school within a set framework and then to be able to re-evaluate and move on. The paradigm of Action Research is not new. Lewin (1946) is reputed to be its father, and Stenhouse (1975) who was a strong advocate of the 'teacher-researcher' movement is also closely associated with it as one of the founders of the approach. The Action Research approach is concerned with the two factors, those of change or action and collaboration between those who are undertaking the research and those with whom the research is being undertaken. It is more than a methodology because the learned and vociferous following of academic researchers who are using this paradigm are doing so as the most effective way of describing, explaining and evaluating what the new breed of teacher researchers is discovering. It is not only a means of collecting data in a variety of different ways, but also a means of bringing together values, beliefs and interpretations into one concept. There are several variants, and I suggest that the choice of the particular approach adopted in this thesis is the most appropriate for the narrative that follows, because it embraces the use of 'I' as the central figure in the research process. The end of the research process is not just a contribution to the knowledge base of education, but is also relevant to educational practitioners. Kemmis and Henry (1984) and Kincheloe (1991) recognised the ownership of knowledge and the control over the research process that Action Research gives, and were advocates of the approach being given the status of a paradigm. Schön (1995) indicated the need for the development of a new epistemology for the 'new scholarship,' and Anderson and Herr (1999:12) make the point that:

We believe that the insider status of the researcher, the centrality of the action, the requirement of spiralling self reflection on action and the intimate, dialectical relationship of researcher to practice, all make the practitioner research alien (and often suspect) to researchers who work outside Gage's three academic paradigms.

The development of its own norms and its lack of adherence to the stricture of technical rationality that make it academically contentious, puts Action Research outside the framework of the accepted academic paradigms and makes Action Research a participant

in a 'paradigm war'. The war is concerned not just with epistemology, but also with the academic acceptance of legitimising the concept of practitioner research. One of the main criticisms of Action Research is this lack of rigour; it is a '*soft science*' approach. While clearly the argument for empiricism put forward by the positivists gains academic favour in some areas of research, the rigour and validity in Action Research comes from two points. Firstly from the process of triangulation between usually three represented parties or perspectives, and secondly from the fact that the outcomes of Action Research are used to move educational development, ideas and strategies forward, in this case, for the institution. The process of triangulation is discussed later in this chapter as a research method. It does not have the control of the independent variables of positivistic research, nor does it have statistically acceptable data from which large-scale representations can be made. The counter argument is that statistics themselves have to be interpreted and are inferential and therefore as open to misinterpretation as the data from Action Research. The case has to be made to the academy that Action Research has both the intellectual rigour and validity for the paradigm to sit alongside its academic partners. Its approach allows for the creation of specific knowledge about a specific problem in a specific situation. It then offers more because of its dynamic characteristics in that it can offer a monitoring facility, feedback on the effects of that data and after interpretation offers the next step in the movement forwards. Empirical research does not have that same flexibility. The dynamic, changing and fragmented scenario of educational research lends itself to the Action Research approach. I would argue that Action Research does this without hesitation, and argue that my thesis goes further. It moves out of the paradigm of Action Research and requires another epistemological framework in which to operate. I am not arguing for yet another paradigm, just that my work with its variety of approaches and synthesis does not sit clearly anywhere. It would seem to transcend the paradigm wars.

I discount the Action Research model proposed by Stenhouse (1975) who was one of the founding advocates of the paradigm. I discount it on the grounds that while he actively encouraged teacher researchers to be involved in reflective practice of their own work, he maintained that experts from outside, that is, external researchers were the ones who finally explained the practice of teaching. Further, it was these external expert '*outsiders*' who were the ones to be believed. I know I am in a position to narrate, reflect, analyse and interpret my work as, to use MacLure's (1996) term, an '*insider*' in my educational environment. Cunningham (1999) explains at length in his appendix '*Action Research: How can I improve what I am doing?*' the reasons for his choice of Action Research

methodology and I find myself both agreeing and disagreeing with him. Unlike Cunningham, I want to be and am a participant observer in my research. I do want to try and interpret actions that are taking place with me and around me, and from that point of view I join the Hermeneutic interpretative approach to Action Research. This research approach is supported by the work of Hitchcock and Hughes (1989:28). Here the researcher becomes involved and develops a *'relationship with the subjects of the research'*. In addition, Scott and Usher (1996:18) add the dynamic that *'We need to understand the meanings that construct and are constructed by interactive human behaviour'*. This interpretation will come from, as Gadamer (1975) explains, previous *'tradition'* knowledge and it is an important component in the process of understanding the present, and planning for the future.

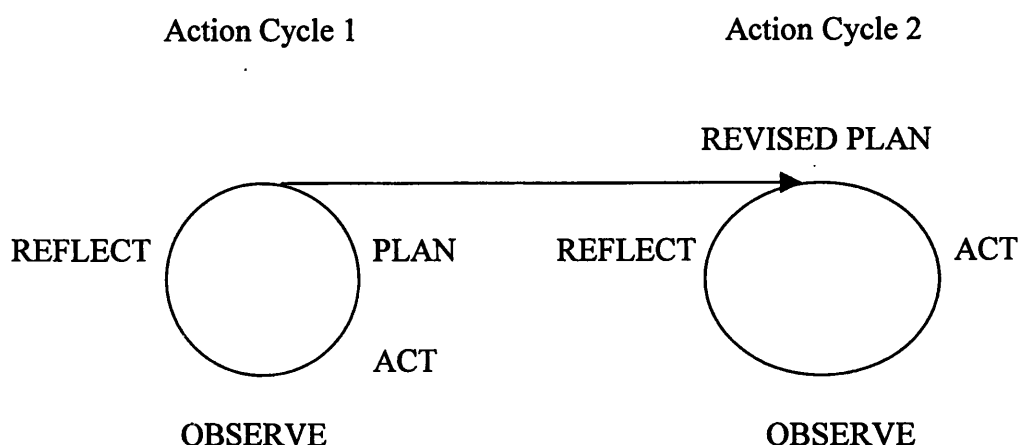
Action Research - the process

In his book *'A Teachers Guide to Classroom Research'*, Hopkins (1985) quotes the researcher Kemmis (1983:32):

Action Research is a form of self reflected inquiry undertaken by participants in social (including educational) situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of (a) their own social or educational practices, (b) their understanding of those practices and (c) the situation in which these practices were carried out. It is most rationally empowering when undertaken by participants collaboratively, though it is often undertaken by individuals, and sometimes in co-operation with 'outsiders'. In education, Action Research has been employed in school based curriculum development, professional development, school based improvement programmes and systems planning and policy development.

This approach used widely by Stenhouse (1980) and later by Elliott (1981, 1991) adopted Kurt Lewin's (1946) four stages of the approach as 'Planning, Acting, Observing and Reflecting'. Lewin's approach was a different one to that which is now accepted. His concept as Hopkins (1985:54) explains was *'as an externally validated intervention designed to assist a client system, functionalist in orientation and prescriptive in practice'*. While much Action Research today is outside the sphere of education and the Lewin's approach is still appropriate, educational research has a slightly different need. The difference in today's educational world is that the research is internal, that is inside the school, usually initiated and undertaken by teachers with the end product of school improvement. The original phases devised by Lewin remain as the operational framework but the later refinement of the spiral concept of Kemmis and McTaggart (1981) is more helpful in school development.

Figure 2 The Kemmis Action Research Cycle. (Hopkins, 1985:34)



The advantage of this approach to the research problem is that the research potentially helps the practitioner to perform better, i.e. more effectively rather than just enlarging the body of general knowledge about the situation. The outcome of the research must be fully evaluated before such claims can be made, and be directly accessible to the teachers. The approach is designed to answer questions that will affect the actions and behaviour of those teachers with potential for personal and school improvement. It allows for an insight into existing practices and for the alteration to those practices if required. Additionally with careful contextualising, the process and the outcomes will be generalisable for others to use. The concept of generalisation is another area of criticism of the paradigm. I offer in this thesis the actions carried out in one school and my interpretation of them. What I have tried to do is clearly contextualise the environment, the individuals and the action as I see it. If other teachers in other schools can identify similar situations, then the Action Research data can be generalisable. That is, others can use it in creating their own living theories.

The collaborative aspect of Action Research is questioned and challenged by Waters-Adams (1994:197) who argues that Action Research is '*Concerned primarily with individuals, engaged in a process of constructing understanding about their practice in order that they might improve it*'. To counter this concern, and to place my research within the appropriate context and to give it sufficient validity and academic acceptance, I quote from a work by an M.Phil. Student at the Open University (1999:4) in an unpublished paper;

Elliott (1991), however, warns that reflection in isolation reduces Action Research to a form of 'technical rationality' a view supported by Noffke and Brennan (1997), who argue that an individualistic approach restricts teachers to changing action only within their own classrooms. Whilst there is a need to

refocus school improvement work towards the level of the classroom (Reynolds and Stoll, 1998), teachers themselves must increasingly view their own classroom practice from, a whole school perspective (Hopkins, 1993). In other words, teachers must recognise the complex relationship between the individual practice and the organisational structures within which they work (Grundy, 1994) in order to develop coherent strategies for integrating organisational and curriculum change (Gray et al, 1999).

The paradigm of Action Research is challenging the universities. Schön (1995:12) makes this observation:

Introducing the new scholarship into institutions of higher education means becoming involved in an epistemological battle. It is a battle of snails, proceeding so slowly that you have to look carefully in order to see it going on. But it is happening nonetheless.

Action Research, Schön argues, has a ‘*rationality of its own*’ which challenges the up to now epistemology used in the university setting. This rationality and creation of its own norms have been central to the arguments creating the ‘*paradigm wars*’ commented on by Gage (1989) earlier in this chapter; the problem being that teacher knowledge has to validate itself in the eyes of the university’s academic body. Rigour, claims for validity in practitioner research and the legitimacy of undertaking such research are problems facing the teacher and the teaching profession. Staff in university departments of education find themselves caught in the middle of this war. Anderson and Herr (1999) make the point well when they refer to the work of Meyer and Rowan (1997:12) that:

The problems faced by professional schools such as colleges of education are complex, since members of these communities must legitimate themselves to an environment which include both a university culture that values basic research and theoretical knowledge and a professional culture of the schooling that values applied research and narrative knowledge.

Anderson and Herr (1999) have no hesitation in supporting and encouraging practitioner research, and an effective method of engaging in such research is through the Action Research process. If this is legitimated, then the universities will need to change their response to such practice and embrace this new form of scholarship. There is some evidence that this is now happening, Schön’s ‘*snail*’ is moving. The new scholarship of the teacher researcher in the classroom with the class as the subjects of the research is providing a new arena outside that of the usual university setting in which research of a valid nature is being undertaken. Boyer (1990) identified four key roles undertaken by Universities, *those of the scholarship of teaching, the scholarship of discovery, the scholarship of application and the scholarship of integration*. I would argue that educational Action Research embraces all of these ideals. If universities could adopt this

new form of external scholarship and internalise it as part of accepted research practice then the process of teacher research would be given the validation it needs in the eyes of the teachers themselves. Speaking as I do from the classroom, it would be very encouraging for the universities to make the value of 'in school research' clear in order to encourage more to take place. The end point of which will be advancement of the knowledge base from first hand experience. The justification for the use of Action Research is therefore explained, and the use particularly of self in the form of 'I' indicated. The interpretivist approach to the research data underpins the work, but the specific paradigm I chose to work in, was Action Research. Having considered other methodologies and methods in the quest of data, I find that Action Research offers the best approach. Others like the phenomenological approach of Husserl (1965), the ethnomethodological approach of Garfinkel (1967), or the behaviourist approach all have a part to play in the observation and interpretation of actions in the classroom. The criticism of these more traditional approaches to educational research is that educational researchers or outsiders often undertake them. As a consequence, they make assumptions and conceptualise the way teachers think and act from that outside position. Consequently teachers often have a problem in identifying with their ideas and suggestions, and according to Bolster (1983) take no action in the classroom as a result. Action Research offers the advantage of the inclusion of 'I' and in collaboration with others allows for the recording and explanation of activities separated by time and by space to be appropriately recorded at the same time as tying the relevant activities together to form a whole.

This emancipatory ideal is one of the advantages that Action Research offers. Cohen and Manion (1980:48) grasp the nettle in justification of the approach chosen for this study.

Action Research as a method is most appropriate whenever specific knowledge is required for a specific problem in a specific situation, or when a new approach is to be grafted onto an existing system. More than this, however, suitable mechanisms must be available for monitoring progress and for translating feedback into the ongoing system.

I take up the issue of terminology here. Cohen and Manion refer to Action Research as a method. There is a clear tension here in the terminology. The more traditional researchers would argue like Cohen and Manion for Action Research to be classed as a method; one more or alternative way of collecting data. I refer the reader back to the definition of paradigm stated earlier in the chapter and argue that Action Research is more than a method; it is a paradigm in its own right. It has its own epistemology, its own set of values

and beliefs and its own interpretation and view of the world; a much greater claim than just a tool for the researcher to use.

Educational Action Research

Having defined and argued for the Action Research process as the appropriate paradigm for this thesis, I need to add a further refinement. That is to link Action Research to the process of education. What is the justification for adopting the particular approach of my thesis? Ultimately the argument for adoption is located within the fact that Action Research allows for change to take place in an existing dynamic system. Rowland (2000:75) supports the process:

Improving teaching involves critique, personal enquiry and openness to change. Without these, skills alone will not equip us to make sound educational judgements in the changing and often unpredictable circumstances of teaching.

My work as an educator, Senior Manager and Professional Development Manager has shown me that without reflection on process, forward positive development is much more difficult to achieve. As part of that reflection and forward development in my educational setting I see the need for the inclusion of my personal values and beliefs. It is, after all, those values on which my professional work with my colleagues and the pupils is based. Rowland (2000:75) notes that ***‘Enquiring into our teaching inevitably leads us, at some point, to address questions about our values’***. For me, those values articulated in Chapter 2 are inextricably woven into the fabric of my activities, and any questions about those activities will be answered using my values and beliefs as a referent. Goodson (2001) supports the notion of teacher’s personal missions and beliefs being a necessary and integral part of school change and improvement. He makes the point that until there is some detail in the academy of how teacher’s commitment, beliefs and personal standards ***‘underpin the teacher’s sense of vocationalism’***, (Goodson 2001:1) then the process of school improvement will not progress as quickly and as fully as it should.

The cyclic patterns of plan, act, observe, evaluate and if necessary re-plan opens the door to the researcher being part of the process. Unless that freedom of such a dynamic is present, researchers can only report from outside the process, they can only research ‘on’, not ‘with’. If the researcher is embraced as part of the dynamic, then actions of the researcher can be reported in the first person. As support for Educational Action Research I quote Whitehead (1998b: 4) who talks about ***‘reconstructing educational theory so that it would have the capacity to reproduce valid explanations for the educative influence of***

teachers with their pupils'. Where teachers using Action Research are seen by Whitehead (1998b: 4) to be:

..motivated to improve what he or she is doing in action reflection cycles where the tension of contradiction stimulates the imagination to create an action plan, actions are taken and data gathered to make a judgement on the effectiveness of the actions. The concerns plans and actions are modified in the light of the evaluations.

The embracing of contradiction strengthens further development and the dialectics involved add to the process of validation and personal development. In addition to embracing the ability to change and build on developments, Action Research allows for the individual to incorporate his or her set of beliefs and values as part of the process. This ties the action of Action Research into the process of developing the personal living educational theory as the teacher tries to explain and describe their professional activities in the classroom. Lomax (1999:4) adds her authority to Educational Action Research as a process in her paper. In it she indicates that she favours this approach because:

Action Research requires action towards improvement; ones own practice is the main focus; others are involved as collaborators rather than informants; an aim is to generate theory about practice; the enquiry is rigorous; evidence to support the findings is subject to validation; the results are published.

Lomax continues by accepting that there are other methods of educational research available, but falls firmly in favour of this approach as the most suitable. I fully support her as the process she describes fits neatly into the process with which I am engaged. Other forms of educational enquiry produce data from which subsequent action can be taken, but these processes themselves are linear and operate in a closed time scale. There is a start and a clearly defined end to the research process. As such, it tends to be propositional in its outlook, often tries to eliminate contradiction, and offers no flexibility to change or development as part of a dynamic process.

The major criticisms of Educational Action Research are central to the legitimacy of the process, and the validity of the knowledge gained. Academe is still cautious to accept processes that do not conform to the Popper (1972) ideals of objectivity being grounded in intersubjective criticism. The concept of objectivity is an important principal of all research, and Action Research is no exception. As part of my research practice, I have constantly submitted my work to this concept of intersubjective criticism through the use of validation groups, peer review and triangulation in its various forms. These methodological activities have given the research the authenticity required for both academia and the teaching profession. Noffke (1997:329) supports the process of Action

Research; *'The idea of practitioners questioning the basis of their work is an essential element to Action Research efforts across a wide variety of contexts'*. This support from Noffke is helpful to my research methodology and me. She goes on to make some comparisons with the work of researchers like McNiff (1988) and Whitehead (1993), and agrees that while there is a concern about subjectivity she can see the values of the approach. She noted the richness of the Action Research of 'self' data undertaken by Dadds (1995) and also noted that other research *'included the subjective, lived experiences of practitioners, centred on the personal and professional growth of the individual teachers as a "means for the principled modification of professional practice"'*, (Wells 1994:25). Noffke does however provide a criticism of the development of the living theory approach. Perhaps her key criticism is that the living theory approach seems to be incapable of addressing social issues in terms of their interconnections between personal identity and the claim of experiential knowledge, as well as power and privilege in society. Noffke (1997:329) notes that:

As vital as such a process of self-awareness is to identifying the contradictions between one's espoused theories and one's practices, perhaps because of its focus on individual learning, it only begins to address the social basis of personal belief systems. While such efforts can further a kind of collective agency (McNiff 1988), it is a sense of agency built on ideas of society as a collection of autonomous individuals. As such, it seems incapable of addressing social issues in terms of the interconnections between personal identity and the claim of experiential knowledge, as well as power and privilege in society. The process of personal transformation through the examination of practice and self-reflection may be a necessary part of social change, especially in education; it is however, not sufficient.

I would argue that my thesis demonstrates that living theory is capable and does address the social issue of the education and learning of the pupils and the professional learning of the teachers in terms of interconnections between the development of my identity as a professional educator and my claims to experiential or embodied knowledge. Whitehead (1998) challenges the concept of living theory as *'just being solely a set of interconnected propositions'*, but makes the point that they also contain personal values that the Action Researcher inserts into the explanation. This is exactly what I am attempting to do in this research. The values and the way in which they are explained in dialogical terms are crucial to the understanding of the theory because it is these values and beliefs that are the framework of the theory. The engine that drives the theory, the practical application is a living activity that results from this established and basic value premise. While this process applies to educational theories in general, the living theories have the extra component. That is they are constantly changing as the values, beliefs and knowledge of the

practitioner increases and changes. It is the dynamic of living educational theory that sets it apart from straight educational theory. The more conventional definition of an educational theory containing elements of Sociology, History, Philosophy and Psychology were the stepping-stones and building blocks of teachers for many years. Whitehead's comment is that they do not contain the personal touch. In the vignettes found in Chapters 6 and 7 there is clear evidence of these interconnections and the personal touch at work. The educational development of the pupils as their self-esteem is raised, or as they are helped via mentoring to raise their grades from D to C is evidence of these connections. Not only are they developed in terms of hard indicator evidence like improved examination performance, but the soft indicators also show a change in them as individuals as a result of these intervention activities. My developing self-knowledge has also helped in my interactions with my teacher colleagues. As the Professional Development Manager, the learning and understanding of my interpersonal skills and personality blend is a major aid to my work with colleagues. As my awareness of myself has increased through my personal Action Research cycles, so I have felt increasingly empowered to share that embodied knowledge with others. This knowledge has been achieved as a mix of experience as I have wrestled with the social and professional interaction of working with, and managing people, and the knowledge gained from life and experience in an educational setting. I have also demonstrated in the thesis insights about power and privilege in society as I have shown my concern to provide support for particular groups of pupils based on principles of social justice. The vignette on the Yr 11 and Yr 10 mentoring projects highlighted such sensitivity and concern. The interconnections between my work as an educator and my personal values and beliefs are intertwined and connected to each other and act as a guiding principal in the decisions I make and the actions I take. It is the combination of Action Research and the development of living educational theory process that has enabled me to both develop and explicate my values as an educator and Professional Development Manager. To be able to show the relationship between the processes involved, and people with whom I am engaged, act as a validation of the approach I have taken in the thesis.

I also challenge Noffke's concerns of '*sufficiency*'. In my role as an educator, Deputy Headteacher and Professional Development Manager involved in a whole school improvement process, I would respond by emphasising that the total immersion of my 'being' is central to my work. I change personally and professionally as a result of increasing experience and from influences both within the school and in my personal life.

This transformation is then reflected back into my practice. It is this reflection, change and application that lead to the development of my living educational theory. This theory in turn is the guiding light, showing me how to interrogate, administer and change the systems and people with whom I work. I would argue then that my work as outlined in the thesis has a bigger influence on me, and me on it, than Noffke is prepared to accept. This of course needs the verification and validation that Popper (1972) is so anxious about.

Validity in my educational Action Research has been enhanced by such activities as the use of validation groups (Forrest, 1983) and their demand for evidence. Validation by the use of 'critical friends' is a similar process advocated by Delong and Wideman (1996:2) and MacBeath *et al* (2001). Added to this is the process of 'triangulation'. All of these processes are well in hand in the work at St John's and the validation group is formed and in action. Finally, to incorporate the values of the researcher I turn to Covey (1994), in Delong and Wideman (1996:4) where he refers to Action Research as the '*inside-out approach*'. *The professional begins with what he / she values and cares about to determine the research question and process.*

Validity

The question of validity of research from a paradigm such as Action Research must now be addressed. Hitchcock and Hughes (1995:105) define validity:

Validity is concerned with the extent to which descriptions of events accurately capture these events, for example, the extent to which the material being collected by the researcher presents a true and accurate picture of what it is claimed is being described.

The major hurdle to be crossed is the acceptance of the Action Research paradigm being valid in the eyes of academia. Anderson and Herr (1999) ask the question '*Is "Practitioner Research" really research?*' The opposition from academia to these different and relatively new forms of scholarship is based around the fact that the tried and tested methodologies of causal relationships that in turn produce reliability and repeatability are not appropriate to the new type of teacher research being undertaken. This '*academic imperialism*' (Anderson and Herr 1999:14), which is tied to the technical rationality view, is proving difficult to move away from as this gives the validity with which the academic world can feel comfortable. The reluctance to acknowledge the validity of practitioner research is a battle that continues and is part of the tension of the 'paradigm wars' and initiated Schön's call for a new epistemology. Universities feel comfortable with 'outsider' research such as that of Stenhouse (1975) but less comfortable with the 'insider' research

of the teacher practitioner. The university's critique of this 'insider research' could be interpreted as the fact that teachers do not have the training or the time to carry out such research and by implication therefore, any data collected would not be of an acceptable form to the academic world. It is not until Richardson (ed.) (1998) *Handbook of Research on Teaching* that a chapter on the teacher as a researcher is included. Zeichner and Noffke (1998:13) who are the authors of the chapter make the point that: '*Research done by teachers should not be seen as merely an extension of the current knowledge base, but rather a challenge to existing forms of knowledge*'. There does seem to be a slow but increasing acceptance of the validity of the paradigm within academic circles. The new scholarship is now being recognised as having something to offer the academic world.

If this is the case, then the next hurdle is for educational research, with its fragmented non-linear approaches, is to prove the validity of its data findings. Validity has a number of different forms; Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) '*descriptive*' or Anderson and Herr (1999) '*outcome validity*' is concerned with whether the description given by the researcher does in fact describe what it sets out to do. Is it authentic and accurate? Hitchcock and Hughes's (1995) '*Explanatory validity*' or Anderson and Herr's (1999) '*Process validity*' is the justification into the accuracy of whether the explanation given can be justified from the evidence presented. Are the explanations given internally consistent, and are there any other alternative explanations. Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) '*Instrument or technique validity*' questions the appropriateness of the data collection techniques or the instruments suited to the type of data required for the research question. Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) '*Criterion validity*' is a test of whether the research data from this study compares with similar data from other accepted and already validated studies. Added to these categories of validity, Anderson and Herr (1999) have created further categories. '*Democratic validity*' is concerned with the degree of collaboration with which the research has been undertaken or if the research has not been undertaken collaboratively then the validity centre around how each of the multiple interests are taken into account. This is of particular relevance in this thesis where collaboration is the cornerstone of the improvement process and my involvement in it. Cunningham (1983) creates another version of democratic validity that he calls '*local validity*'. This validity is concerned with how valid and appropriate the solutions are to the problems discovered in a particular context. Watkins (1991) referred to this factor as '*relevancy*' or '*applicability*' criteria for validity. Finally, Anderson and Herr (1999) refer to the concept of '*dialogic validity*' where the '*goodness*' of the research is monitored through a form of peer review. All of

these different forms of validity are ways of checking the accuracy and quality of the research data, its methodology, evidence and claims. Connelly and Clandinin (1990:7) make the point that all of these validity criteria are in constant flux, and each enquiry must find the most appropriate form of validation.

We think a variety of criteria, some appropriate to some circumstances and some to others, will eventually be the agreed-upon norm. It is currently the case that each inquirer must search for, and defend, the criteria that best applies to his or her work.

This research must be judged by several categories of this validity. The dialogic validity is undertaken at university level for the thesis itself, and at school and individual level by the validation group and by the staff and pupils in a dialectic with myself. The democratic validity is central to the research as most of the school based activities involve collaboration between myself and the other teacher, other teachers and the pupils, the teaching staff as a whole and the Senior Management Team in the development of new school effectiveness processes. Outcome validity is checked by an evaluation of the new systems put into place, or the results achieved by the pupils and the teachers, noted as hard indicators like examination results. The whole school attains process validity by reflection on the process put in place, their evaluation and the changes that are then collaboratively agreed. What is without doubt is the need to undertake validity checks, and this process will be discussed later in the chapter under method.

The research undertaken in this thesis and the relationships developed between teacher and teacher, between teachers and pupils and between these two groups and myself is a demonstration of Boyer's ideals in action at school level. What I am undertaking in this thesis is to show how 'I' as I involve myself in an Action Research school improvement project have applied and integrated these ideals into my work. The creation of my living educational theory as I have worked in my school has involved the scholarship of discovery both for myself and for others. As part of the school improvement initiatives, what I have shown is the way the school has integrated the initiatives and their outcomes into the culture and ethos of the school to such an extent that both culture and ethos are changing. The scholarship of teaching is examined, both of myself and of my colleagues, and an in-depth analysis of 'what makes a good teacher good' is an ideal of Boyer.

Application as a scholarship ideal is a theme that pervades the framework of the improvement initiatives as well as the wider meaning of the term to embrace the concept of applying knowledge and ideas developed from research. My thesis goes further however, I would claim to add an additional scholarship to those of Boyer, that of 'educational

scholarship'. By this I mean that my thesis has researched the processes of teaching and learning at classroom level. It has looked at the dynamics of educational relationships inside an institution and shown how the organisational approaches of the school effectiveness activities of whole school management can be integrated with individual processes of improvement strategies at individual and class level. This seems to me to be another branch of the scholarship ideal which Boyer is suggesting universities should embrace. The constellation of my own educational values as I have integrated them into my work has made the living educational theory that I have developed mine. The ideal of a teacher with the knowledge base of experience in the classroom with the pupils is a resource that the world of education is now recognising and beginning to value. The beliefs of Argyris and Schön (1974: 2) that:

We do believe, however that intentional, systematic, and disciplined inquiry on educational practice by 'insiders', while fraught with unique epistemological, methodological, political, and ethical dilemmas, has great potential for challenging, confirming and extending current theory and identifying new dimensions of administrative practice for study.

The battle of acceptance for such knowledge is still being fought on the academic University front. Anderson and Jones (1999:3) frame the problem:

Unfortunately, practitioner knowledge even when it represents intentional and systematic inquiry is often relegated to categories like 'practical knowledge' and seen as not measuring up to the rigour of 'formal knowledge' (Fenstermacher, 1994; Huberman, 1996; Richardson, 1994). Terms like 'practical' and 'formal' tend not only to refer to differences in the nature of insider and outsider generated knowledge, but also confer status differences that devalue insider-generated knowledge. We will argue that practitioner research forces redefinition of 'rigour' in research and that it has both local and external 'validity' in that its results can both be used for the immediate improvement of practice and disseminated to other settings.

Academic standards and rigour must be maintained, but acceptance that that rigour can come from the classroom must now be accepted if the huge knowledge base of teachers is to be valued and used. I hope that, to quote Anderson and Jones (1999:12):

Academics (outsiders) want to understand what it is like to be an insider without 'going native' and losing the outsider's perspective. Practitioners (insiders) already know what it is like to be an insider, but because they are 'native' to the setting, they must work to see the taken for granted aspects of their practice from an outsider's perspective. (Anderson, Herr and Nihlen, 1994, p. 27)

Boyer makes a plea for Universities to challenge '*content and pedagogy*', and so they should, but they should also be flexible enough to accept the change in the direction from which these new scholarships are coming. They should embrace them into their academic world rather than attempting to stifle developments under the guise of academic rigour.

Johnston (1998:253) adds an additional comment to those on scholarship. She notes that Boyer makes specific reference to teaching:

Teaching, according to Boyer, was not simply a matter of dissemination but of scholarship, transforming and extending knowledge by a process of classroom debate and a continual examination and challenging of both content and pedagogy.

Taking Boyer further, she insisted that the scholarship of discovery or research was more than just a concern about new knowledge; it was also about intellectual excitement. If this is the case, then the teacher in the classroom has a great deal to offer. Not just to the world of academe but to his colleagues and to the pupils. The every day work of the teacher in the classroom which when placed in a reflective framework and explained using a new epistemology as advocated by Schön (1995) will have great credibility and value to the world of education. Schön argues that if we follow the basic concepts of Lewin, of a practitioner's reflection on knowing and reflection in action can give rise to 'actionable theory', which is generalisable. To use Schön's term 'reflective transfer' means that they can be carried over into new situations and applied. If this is the case, and rigorous testing proves them to be valid then it forms a new branch of knowledge. Schön (1995:31) suggests that:

The new scholarship implies Action Research. The new categories of scholarly activity must take the form of Action Research. What else could they be? They will not consist in laboratory experimentation or statistical analysis of variance, nor will they consist only or primarily in the reflective criticism and speculation familiar to the humanities. If teaching is seen as a form of scholarship, then the practice of teaching must be seen as giving rise to new forms of knowledge.

Interpretation of that knowledge evidence gives a guide to reflection on what might be changed, implementing that change and then collecting evidence on the effectiveness of that change. The cycle then starts again as the situation has moved forward and possibly altered in the light of the evidence gained.

I now discuss the data collection techniques I have used to tell the story of my learning and how I created my living educational theory using the teachers and pupils in my school in the frame of a school improvement process.

Dialectics

The discussions, debates, narratives and statements are all irrevocably intertwined within the thesis as I struggle to describe and explain to others my practice. Unusually, and perhaps uniquely I enter into the arena of a battle that has raged for over 2000 years

between dialectical and propositional knowledge and the dialogical representation of those two forms of learning. Uniquely, I claim in this thesis to hold the two forms of knowledge together at the same time. It is difficult because there has yet to be a resolution to the difference of the Aristotelian Propositional knowledge, which by definition can contain no contradictions, and the Socratic knowledge of the Dialectics, which embraces contradiction. This conflicting philosophy is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 9.

Dialogue

I use the word dialogue freely in my descriptions and explanations, and I am aware that there are several interpretations of the word dialogue. In the traditional research sense of discourse analysis, dialogue has a very specific meaning and the result of that discourse analysis brings data, which can be interpreted and quantified. It is used in the context of the Aristotelian Propositional form removing contradiction.

I use dialogue in a more general dialectical way as I engage in negotiation with pupils and colleagues in the school improvement process. I use it as a form of narrative, a form of explanation and as a form of validation at various places in the research. Linguistically, I find it difficult to articulate some of my feelings, emotions and beliefs in a form that gives full meaning and depth to understanding the influences that they have on my practice, but by using different forms of narrative and different forms of dialogue I have tried. I, like Coulter (1999:5), want '*..to provide examples of another approach to teacher research that tries to generate both knowledge about teaching and dialogue about that knowledge*'. Coulter (1999:12) goes on to use the support of Bakhtin (1984) to further actively encourage the use of dialogue in Action Research. He says:

Indeed, what I am arguing for is a new kind of Action Research, one with a different conception of action from traditional Action Research. Action is not only about doing, but understanding, that is, action can be as Hannah Arendt (1958) describes, a public dialogue about what is important, good and just.

To give the work *dialogic validity* I turn again to the work of Anderson and Herr (1999). They suggest that this validity can be achieved in one of several ways. Peer review through publication is the accepted academic research route. Both democratic and dialogic validity can be achieved argue Carr and Kemmis (1986) and Torbert (1981) by collaborative enquiry and researchers like Martin (1987) and MacBeath *et al* (2001) suggest validation by using a '*critical friend*' or other practitioner researchers. This research will use the latter two approaches and the record of that dialogue will be evident as part of the narrative in the script.

Vignettes and singularity

To help the reader understand the process of research that I have undertaken more clearly, I use through out the thesis, the term 'vignettes', (Hopkins *et al* 1994). While not a new term, Hopkins *et al* use it to great descriptive effect in their IQEA work. These are small studies that exemplify the initiatives being used in the school to bring about the raising of achievement.

The whole venture can be described in Michael Bassey's (1995:111) terms as a study of a 'Singularity'.

A singularity is a set of anecdotes about particular events occurring within a stated boundary, which are subjected to systematic and critical search for some truth. This truth while pertaining to the inside of the boundary, may stimulate thinking about similar situations elsewhere.

Bassey has to go on to further explain that a boundary can be defined in space and time, and suits my study as I use the classroom and the whole school at different times with different people. Having chosen the most appropriate model for the main research strategy it is now necessary to examine the techniques of data collection.

Part 2 - Method

Data collection techniques

Access to carry out the study, and to all the information gathered, was undertaken with the full knowledge and agreement of the Headteacher, the Governing body, the staff of the school, the pupils involved in the research and the parents. To further make the process totally transparent, the Headteacher agreed that a note in the monthly newsletter to all parents could include a paragraph that indicated that research was taking place in the school. An 'opt out' clause was added to allow parents to withdraw their children from this research activity should they wish to do so. In the event, no concern was expressed. Walker (1985:22) says '*The access problem consists in the main in persuading people to let you enter their schools and classrooms, fill in your questionnaires or administer your tests to their children*'. This access problem was not so for me as I was already part of the fabric of the institution. I was fortunate to encounter a fully informed and very co-operative group of staff and governors who were not only happy to allow me the access I wanted, they positively encouraged me to undertake the research. This put me into the position of being both a teacher in the school and an educational researcher. To support my work, I turn to Robson (1993:447) '*The practitioner researcher is someone who holds down a job in some particular area and at the same time carries out systematic enquiry which is of*

relevance to the job'. He points out the advantages and disadvantages of such involvement in research activity. The advantages are:

Insider opportunities – an existing knowledge and experience base about the situation and the people involved.

Practitioner opportunities – There is likely to be a substantial reduction of implementation problems.

Practitioner research synergy – Practitioner insights and role help in the design, carrying out and analysis of useful and appropriate studies.

All of these advantages I would agree were both evident and important in my research case. As I identified in the opening comments of this chapter, limiting pragmatic factors are significant when trying to work full time and carry out research, and the involvement of myself within my school was of tremendous importance to me. The disadvantages of such involvement noted by Robson (1993: Op Cit) are:

Time – Trying to do systematic enquiry on top of normal commitments is difficult.

Lack of expertise – Depends on the individual. A major problem can be not knowing what it is that you don't know.

Lack of confidence – A lack of experience in carrying out studies leads to a lack of confidence.

Insider problems – The insider may have pre-conceptions about issues and solutions. There can also be hierarchy difficulties (both ways i.e. with high status and low status researchers); and possibly the prophet in own country phenomenon (i.e. outside advice may be more highly valued.)

While I note Robson's concerns, I challenge their effect on my situation. Time will always be of concern for teacher researchers, but as I was recording the activities that I was involved with as part of my every day activity in the school, this was of less an issue than for other researchers. Expertise was also not an issue for me. I had previously been involved in an Action Research project for my M.Ed. degree in the school and had developed research techniques through that experience and through discussions and seminars at the University of Bath. Confidence was not a problem for me, and the supportive and co-operative framework of the staff and pupils around me further lessened any problems in this area. Insider insight is a consideration here. I have been at the school a long time and it could be legitimately argued that I was too close to the activities to be able to take an objective view. The outsider validation process was however in place. A number of impartial researchers from the University and other educational institutions have been involved in the implementation and evaluation of many of the initiatives undertaken by the school and they have contributed their valuable advice to me.

As the teacher researcher, I must record that some of the techniques involved needed to be done carefully in order to present as 'bias free' data for the study as possible. The problem of '*critical distance*' was of great concern. As the Head of Upper School and later Deputy Headteacher and a member of the Senior Management Team, evidence from interviews with colleagues has indicated that my position could well have affected the data given, the very concern expressed by Robson (1993) and by Bennett and Harris (2001). In addition, it must also be recognised that some bias is an inevitable part of any investigation. What is to be included or discarded as relevant data, the choice of interviewee, and the framing of the questions for the interview are all subject to the possibility of bias. The material is presented with this caution in mind. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) do not think that being the participant researcher is necessarily detrimental to the results obtained. They would claim that the participant observer within the situation is able to understand more fully the reality of what is happening within that situation. They go on to suggest that rather than trying to eliminate the effects of the researcher on the data, and therefore the reactivity with the situation, a better understanding is obtained if this reactivity is exploited.

However, throughout the enquiry an effort has been made to maintain both the validity and reliability of the data by the thorough cross checking of responses with all the participants during the data collecting processes. Reliability refers to the extent with which any method of data collection is replicable. Reliability as defined by Sapsford and Evans (1979:259) is:

The consistency of results obtained when using a measure in research. It is a word used of measuring instruments, including the human observer functioning as such in ethnographic studies (and elsewhere), and refers to the basic scientific requirement that it should be possible for another worker to duplicate one's results or produce comparable evidence, at least in principle.

Much of the data collected in this research does not demand reliability because this process is more concerned with statistical data or scoring associated with positivistic scientific or empirical research. However, there is some reliable quantitative data in the thesis. Where external organisations like NFER have been used their systems have already been assessed externally for reliability, and that commentary is recorded with the score data for the C.A.T results. The reliability of Cognitive Ability Tests was questioned by some staff, but the sample size and the historical reliability of the data from the NFER helped to mollify the doubts raised. Other 'in house data', like the scores for the self-esteem tests have been assessed using pilot studies. Over the years the results have been compared with predicted outcomes and the reliability quantified. This continues to be an issue to concentrate on if

extrapolation of results and subsequent changes in management and processes by the school are to be undertaken.

Triangulation

The main process used in the validation process in the thesis was that of triangulation. This is crucial to the research as it assists in the development of perspective. Manion and Cohen (1994:233) state that:

Triangulation may be defined as the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour. It is a technique of research to which many subscribe in principle, but which only a minority uses in practice.

In addition, disagreements as well as agreement are important 'signposts' in the pursuit of truth. This triangulation was carried out particularly when undertaking the video research looking at the qualities that make a good teacher. On both occasions when this method of data collection was employed, the teacher concerned and the pupils involved were interviewed separately to record their perceptions of the events that occurred. In particular, the work with Alan Shelton was triangulated with pupils, colleagues, my own observations and those of past pupils of the school.

One of the most positive ways in which data may be triangulated is by the use of Validation Groups. I have therefore established such a group in the school. One aspect of this enquiry that I am finding particularly difficult is the area concerning my subjective values of my professional work and myself. To validate this is of crucial importance to the enquiry and the group will be a very powerful part of the triangulation process.

Research validation groups

If one is to undertake any sort of research, it is important that the data collected is totally embedded in reality. That is to say, that the researcher's perception of events, actions and facts are based in real world and not just subjective value judgements created by the researcher. How can that basis of reality be achieved? Forrest (1983) undertaking research for his M.Ed. carried out this legitimisation activity by recognising the need for an unbiased external judgement. He referred to the work of Foster (1982:55) who proposed that:

Judgements of the researchers need to be subjected to the 'mutual rational control of critical discussion' (Popper 1972) by others who represent a broad spectrum of professional interests who are familiar with the nature of the research and have an interest in the outcomes.

To this end, Forrest established what he called a '*validation group*'. The brief for this group was to analyse the research undertaken, and to discuss the findings both within the context of the research environment and within the wider world of education.

The concept of validation is not new. Entwistle (1973) argued that in research, data used in public discussion must be supported by some form of explanation and evidence before it is accepted, no matter how authoritative the statement is from the researcher. Forrest uses the teacher researcher Pring (1978:130) to point out that:

Being objective is to open to public scrutiny the basis upon which one's judgements are made - so that counter evidence and contrary arguments might if they exist, be levelled against what one says.

Having established that the existence of such a group would enhance the validity of the data achieved, some thought has to be given to the composition of such a group. Foster and Whitehead (1983) propose that the optimum size for such a group should be created in relation to the nature of the research, the size of the organisation from which the evidence is being collected and the structure of that organisation. They suggest that ten is possibly the optimum size and that the composition of that ten should be as wide and as varied as possible in order to achieve maximum impartiality. Representatives from the school with different interests, expertise and knowledge, representatives from the University and possibly members of the governing body seem likely members for my research. Foster and Whitehead (1983:132) identified two conditions that the group must operate by:

- 1. That the organisation of the group be democratic, so that 'the force of rational argument should prevail in the deliberations rather than the power of an individual's institutional position'.***
- 2. The deliberations of the group should be made public.***

Bearing all these factors in mind, I created my research validation group comprised of teacher colleagues and university staff.

Research data collection techniques

The following techniques were used during the research process:

- semi-structured interviews with individuals and groups;
- tape recordings of interviews and meetings;
- questionnaires;
- field log and field notes including data from special meetings that were called;
- video records of teachers in action;

- commentaries of the videos and interpretations from pupils and the teachers concerned;
- diary;
- studies of a singularity and three vignettes.

Enquiry data sources

The data was collected from the following sources:

- documentation e.g. Minutes of meetings, School Handbook, D.E.S. Circulars and the creation of an archive of material;
- working party guidelines;
- research literature;
- resources from the University;
- feedback from University research based initiatives such as the T.V.E.I embedded project with Bath University;
- a trainee teacher's small scale research in the school;
- results from the C.A.T tests;
- results from the Year 7 Spelling and Reading tests;
- KS2 and KS3 S.A.T result;
- teacher comments from Primary schools;
- projected and estimated KS4 grades from teaching staff;
- staff development days;
- comments from validation groups.

Interviews

Wragg (1980:177) in his paper 'Conducting and Analysing Interviews' said:

A major advantage of interviewing is its adaptability. A skilful interviewer can follow up leads, probe responses, investigate motives and feelings which a questionnaire can never do. There are problems of course. It is time consuming and a highly subjective technique, so there is always the danger of bias. Analysing responses can present problems and question wording is as demanding for the interviews as it is for questionnaires.

There are, as Wragg points out, the problems particularly of bias, sample bias, gender bias, response bias and the straight jacket of the structure itself if the questions have been constructed poorly. With due consideration to these problems I decided to undertake the semi-structured type of interview in this study. That is, an interview with a carefully

worked out schedule of questions but with the latitude for allowing the interviewee to enlarge on points as they arise. As Wragg (1980:185) puts it:

A semi-structured interview schedule tends to be the one most favoured by educational researchers as it allows respondents to express themselves at some length, but offers enough shape to prevent aimless rambling.

A structured interview would not be appropriate, as the range of data expected from foreshadowing the question would be precluded if the interview was conducted within a set and rigid framework. The unstructured interview on the other hand was also discounted as time for both the interviewer and the interviewee is always limited and it seemed to be important to extract hard data from the respondents within the time available.

On each occasion, the interviewee or the group chose the venue for the interview, and the day and time also arranged to suit the interviewee. This was intended so that there was no threat or intimidation by using specific offices or areas that could pose pressure for those who feel less secure or sure of their position. The time available for each interview was indicated prior to the start, and each interviewee was made aware at the start of the interview of the confidentiality of the data given, and the intended outcome and use to be made of the study. All the interviewees were quite happy to be involved in the process and gave of their time quite freely. There was always the difficulty of availability and illness, and the whole schedule took much longer to fulfil than was planned for.

Tape recordings

The advantage of using a tape recorder as Hopkins (1985:61) points out:

Audio tape recording is one of the most popular teacher research methods. Transcripts are excellent for those situations where teachers require a very specific and accurate record of a limited aspect of their teaching, or of a particular interaction, say between a specific teacher and child or between two children. Also, simply playing back tapes can be very illuminating and provide useful starting points for further investigation.

The tape recorder is versatile, transportable, provides a great deal of data with ease and can successfully monitor an entire conversation. I have found it of particular help during my own Action Research cycles where I have taped all my tutorials with my supervisors at the University. This has allowed me to take full part in the discussion at the time, and have the luxury of taking the information from the tape at a later date. It has also proved to be an invaluable form of data collection with my semi-structured interviews. There are some disadvantages however. It does not record anything visually. This is a major constraint as non-verbal communication such as facial expression or body language can add significant

detail. Transcription is very time consuming, its presence can be inhibiting and continuity can be disturbed by the practical problems of operating the machine. The site of the microphone to pick up all the verbal responses made can prove to be a problem. Non-directional microphones do not pick up all responses made and some are a little indistinct. In addition, the length of some meetings means that the tape had to be turned over or replaced several times. This proved to be both a distraction and interference to the meeting and there are places on the tape where dialogue is lost while this change over is effected. The third disadvantage often encountered is background noise. Again, useful dialogue can be lost or is of poor quality or it drowns the responses made. Finally one of the major problems of taping a large meeting emerged during the post-meeting analysis. The problem is that it is subsequently difficult to attribute comments made verbally during the flow of the meeting. Individuals and their comments remain anonymous unless voice recognition can be made. To offset this I have undertaken the practice of announcing the name of the speaker, or asking a question of the respondent using their name so that their response is easily identified at a later date.

Questionnaires

Questionnaires were used to establish the feelings of the Year 7 groups after the self-esteem tests and after the residential trip to Pencelli. One of the trainee teachers used them at individual level and with tutor groups, and measured the responses against the original self-esteem test scores established in September 1996.

The value of this type of data collection was that it was easy to ascertain the views of a relatively large group of people. It was quick and easy to administer, record, analyse and quantify the data obtained. The analytical process was carried out in a systematic manner with both a numerical count of responses to each question, and a record of any specific comments made to individual questions. In addition, a note was kept of the issues raised so that a more detailed analysis and comment could be made at the appropriate place later in the study when the individual steps in the Action Research Cycle are analysed in context, particularly in the reflection phase.

Field notes

Field notes were kept throughout the research period, and contained three sorts of data. Firstly they contained notes on issues that arose as a result of discussion, conversation or post-meeting reflections. Secondly they contained some general impressions of the climate

of feeling that prevailed at the time. Thirdly they provided an on-going description of the innovation as it developed and changed. At intervals, this information is written up on the computer as a series of diaries. In addition to creating the diary of progress, these field notes also provided the initial source of information for further papers explaining an action, stage or process in more detail.

Video recordings and commentary analysis

I have used these on several occasions. They have enabled me to get into the classroom, and with the permission of the teacher and the pupils concerned, capture most of the activity that was taking place. I qualify it as most, as the camera can only point one way at one time and inevitably some actions, facial expressions or conversations are missed. I was able to do this in a reasonably unobtrusive way, although post-video analysis does show that both teachers and pupils on occasions were conscious of the presence of the camera. The advantage of this method of data collection is that it can be analysed at a later date and can capture body language, gesture, facial expression and movement as well as the focus of the video itself, that is the teaching styles used. Prosser (1998) has made important inroads into the acceptance of the use of image-based research. He has gathered together a group of qualitative researchers for whom imagery whether it is by photo, video, picture or graffiti has added much to their research data. Prosser's (1998:1) observations are that:

Taken cumulatively images are signifiers of a culture; taken individually they are artefacts that provide us with very particular information about our existence. Images provide researchers with a different order of data, more importantly, an alternative to the way we have perceived data in the past.

Schratz and Steiner-Löffler (1998) suggest that the concept of using photographic evidence enables children to make evaluative statements with more legitimacy as they are often limited by the lack of vocabulary in expressing their real meaning and feelings. They quote Walker (1993:237) who says:

We were attracted by Rob Walker's suggestion on the use of photographs in evaluation and research who argues 'it touches on the limitations of language, especially language used for descriptive purposes. In using photographs the potential exists, however elusive the achievement, to find a way of thinking about social life that escapes the traps set by language'. (Walker 1993, p. 72)

While I accept that these researchers are referring to photographs, the student evaluative contributions to my videos fall into the same category. The disadvantage of the camera I used was that the microphone was not of sufficient quality to pick up the detailed verbal interchanges made between the teacher and the pupil. I considered that closer intrusion with the camera would alter the balance of the relationship between the teacher and the

pupil and make the data less valid. In order to make the interpretation of this data more reliable, I have asked both the teachers and the pupils to watch the videos independently and comment upon them. I have written an observational script in descriptive terms of what I saw and in some cases what I interpreted as taking place, and the teachers and pupils have commented on these observations and made some of their own. Schratz and Steiner- Löffler (1998:246) continue their argument by saying:

Evaluating (certain aspects of) education always means dealing with a very complex social structure, and breaking down reality into photographic images is always an act of constructing new realities in our conceptual world. It is the study of the social significance that is how things, events, and rules of interactions become meaningful within the overall framework of reference, which signifies the changes of the overall system and structures of the system. (Simon, 1993, p. 26). Since organisational life is always constituted by multiple realities, taking photographs offers a challenging opportunity to bring to the fore the different layers of reality. To do so, the camera forms a special lens which can be focussed on the single elements of organisational life by changing between the fore-ground and the background and thus enabling 'unimportant details' to become the main focus of interest.

Thus it is the case with the videos. The students identify the '*unimportant detail*', bring it to the fore and make sure that the researcher considers its value in their context of evaluation.

Diaries

This is an important part of my research database. This is a kind of self-administered questionnaire. It is recognised that as a data collection process it can include bias, but if this is acknowledged and eliminated then it is an additional useful source of data. Burgess (1981) supports the use of diaries as a method, but insists that it be used in addition to and supporting other data gathering methods. I take issue with this premise however. The diary of events is in my opinion an excellent objective record of data collected. My diary includes specific times and events that occurred and I often recorded verbatim the words used in conversations. I would agree however that when I recorded my impressions of staff feelings, or of atmosphere, then the need for a triangulation approach was needed to validate the records I made. Once again, I am conscious that this sort of data collection could be biased and very subjective, and that the information gained must again be triangulated against data collected from other sources. However it is also possible to be objective about facts collected providing they are recorded faithfully without interpretation or value put on them.

Reports

Additional analysis is achieved by the construction of reports. Reports are used in two ways. Firstly they act as an analytical tool for myself to understand my own learning. They are a reflective mechanism where one can distance one's self from the confusion of the present and critically evaluate and consider the process and its implications from a distance. Secondly, reports are used at the validation meetings for the group to acquaint themselves with the claims made by myself about the progress and achievements of the research. With these reports, the validation group were able to challenge, agree and understand the evidence being presented by the researcher.

Documentary evidence

The school brochures, planning documents, memos, OFSTED reports, research literature and the school Strategic Plan documents of both a current and a historical nature were used at different times during the research. Current documents provide background information and an understanding of issues of the moment. The historical information was used to establish the basis from which decisions were made to bring about change, and to 'ground' the school and the issue of raising achievement within the school's development.

Minutes of meetings

Throughout the research period there were a considerable number of meetings both directly concerned with the introduction and development of the raising of achievement. There were also meetings such as full school, departmental or those from various working parties that expressed some viewpoint on the issues which have been collected and commented upon as appropriate. Both of these sources have to be treated with the understanding that they may only give some of the whole picture. While they can be part of a bank of information, they cannot be accepted as giving the complete picture in isolation.

Archives

The collection of data from the various sources needs to be stored in such ways that access and easy constant referral is possible. I have made this possible by creating an archive of material stored in a series of box files. These files I have numbered and inside I have created an index of contents. The box file contains a series of folders each with an aspect of the research work within it. For example, there is a folder on self-esteem, C.A.T scores, intervention activities, minutes of meetings. There are approximately 35 folders each

catalogued on a master sheet. Each document within those folders is also catalogued so that I can access the appropriate document easily.

Tape archive

In addition to the written material, there are a number of taped interviews from which data has been collected. These too have been recorded on an index noting the date of recording, the speakers involved and the subject of the interview.

Floppy disc archive

All the work concerning the research is being stored on a computer. This has been organised under specific file headings with a Directory of its own. For safety reasons, the files are stored both on the hard disc of the computer and on a series of floppy discs. These discs are updated regularly on a cyclic basis. This prevents the problem of a corrupted disc interfering with the storage of the data, and ensures a back up should the hard disc on the computer fail.

Libraries

Access to the library at the University of Bath, the school library and my personal collection of books have all been used to research information and develop ideas. The library at the University has the added benefit of access to all the other libraries and educational institutions in the world, so that research material of the most up to date nature is available.

The Internet

Many of the most recent areas of research are now recorded on the Internet. Copies of lectures delivered at conferences and papers written and delivered at specific meetings are now all available using this medium. Access to this is possible at the school, at Bath University and at home. Again, this resource can be used both as a receiver of information, and as an interrogator using the relevant search engine.

E-mail

This is now being used as a form of communication and data exchange between my supervisors and myself. The advantage of the method is that of immediacy, and the ability to transfer large amounts of information quickly and accurately to source. The additional advantage of this facility is that communication with researchers and authors is also

possible. Such activity as asking for permission to use articles or make reference to particular pieces of research is now much more possible and immediate.

Data analysis and evaluation procedures

Analysis of data is undertaken at each stage of the 'plan, act, observe, and reflect process'. The information gathered using the techniques outlined earlier are explained, analysed, triangulated and commented upon. The progressive focusing process guides the explanation of the data, and issues that were beyond the scope of this study were noted but not followed. At the end of the final phase of the cycle, comment will be made on further steps to be undertaken both in terms of the management of the system for the school, and as a starting point for other research.

Justification of data sources

The collection of data from the different sources was planned to give as wide a spread of opinion and perspective as possible. There were some problems associated with availability for interview on occasions. As always, teachers are very busy people, but there has not been an occasion to date where the interview has not eventually taken place.

Where pupils were interviewed, a volunteer sample was requested, and an equal mix of gender, social class and intellectual ability was encouraged but not insisted upon. All of the pupils were clearly told of the purpose of the interviews, and agreed to take part with no coercion. In fact, quite the reverse, they took a keen interest in what was being undertaken, and seemed flattered to be asked. Teachers were very willing to help, and some either volunteered to take part, or were very willing volunteers once asked. Some even recommended other teachers whom they felt would have a perspective on the issue being discussed.

Some difficulties encountered

The final part of this chapter is an overview of the difficulties I have encountered in the writing and recording of the information I have gathered.

The first of the difficulties that I need to bring to the reader's attention is that of tense. This thesis will have taken in excess of 6 years to develop, write and finally submit. During that time recording and writing has been an ongoing and cumulative process. As I write now I am tempted to write in the present tense because that is where I am. Tomorrow what I

write today will be past tense. The information I wrote a year ago is almost history. How then should I capture my words and thought? The temptation is to wait until I have finished creating, gathering and shaping my thesis and then to re-write the text in the present tense to make it sound fresh and alive for the reader. The text is written in a variety of tenses depending on the subject under discussion and on the time that it was written. The present is used to note my feelings as I write now; observation and particularly evaluations have to be retrospective and are written in the past tense. I hope that this is not too confusing and does not detract from the real message contained within the words.

The second operational problem is the notation of historical fact and developments that have occurred in the school since the start of the research. Since 1995, the Headteacher, Senior Management Team and managerial hierarchy have changed both in personnel and operational rationale. The learning environment, ethos and vision of the school have moved forwards. Operating policy, day-to-day routine, decision-making process and a myriad of other factors have all changed or at the very least altered in emphasis and importance over time. This is to be expected and is part of the Action Research cycle, but the *'telling of it'* is difficult. Again the temptation is to review the processes at the end of writing and bring the thesis up to date with the syntax in current vogue. This too would not truly represent the developments that have occurred on the way, and give a misleading view both of events and outcome. I have therefore left the description as was applicable at the time of the events noted. To aid understanding I have included an updating process to lead the reader through from the past to the present.

The third problem remains that of finding the appropriate epistemology and language to articulate some of my findings. This remains a problem that I have not as yet solved, and is perhaps an area for further research.

Summary of the chapter

The decision I have taken is for the research methodology to follow a qualitative Action Research route including autobiographical detail to create the basis for the living educational theory. The chapter has given an outline of the rationale for the methodology of the study and provides the basis from which the data analysis is grounded. As the thesis develops, more in-depth study of some areas will emerge, and emphasis will be made of significant areas that specifically add to the knowledge base. What is of some significance is that the methodology I have used makes this part of my unique and original contribution

to the educational academy. I have, to use the words in a song by Frank Sinatra, '*done it my way*'. This has not been done lightly, but with the full knowledge of the literature and current research base firmly to the front of my mind. Some of the originality of my contribution comes from the variety of dialogues I have used, diaries, pupil voices, teacher observation, peer assessment, videos, tape recording, interviews have all required different styles to portray the fullest meanings. Added to this is the originality of using the Action Research, School Improvement and School Effectiveness field's synergy to locate my learning in a whole school process. Throughout the remainder of the thesis validity, reliability and triangulation will continue to be pursued rigorously. Bias will continue to be recognised, and the ongoing Action Research spiral will continue to be recorded and analysed. The next chapter will focus on the Action Research processes taking place in the school.

Chapter 4 - The School's Action Research Cycles

This chapter highlights the Action Research strand of the thesis. After an introduction to the process outlining the school improvement initiatives at work in the school, the main section of the chapter contains a selection of entries in narrative, in the form of a diary. I have recorded verbatim the events feelings and perceptions through the research period. I hope that the reader will get a feel for the Action Research Cycles as they revolve, and continue to appreciate the confluence of the strands of School Improvement, School Effectiveness and Action Research together with the various journeys.

In this chapter, I would like to guide the reader through the Action Research Cycle process which is the basis of my thesis. This is central to the developments and actions in the school because it is as a result of action, reflection and evaluation together with external influences that the pupils, the teachers and the school move forwards. It will be shown that some of the strategies and initiatives concerning the raising of achievement were not totally successful, indeed some of them failed completely. The reasons for this are often complex. Sometimes it was poor management, sometimes a lack of will from the staff who have to undertake them, sometimes ignorance of the benefits and desired outcomes and sometimes just ideas that emerged at inappropriate times. The school like any other organic institution has its 'ups and downs'. When these troughs occur, staff morale is lowered and development is slowed. The vehicle for illustrating these fluctuations in the school's activities is through the diary seen in full in **Appendix 8**. As indicated in the previous chapter, diaries are an important tool to use, and accepting the caveats that Burgess (1985) and Zimmerman and Weider (1977) put onto this method of assimilating data the diary shows how the school moved forward during the research period. In addition, it shows how I the researcher also learnt, moved and changed both in actions and in thought process over the same research period. The time line is continuous although as Lomax and Parker (1995) noted, developments and events in research are often fragmented. Events do not occur naturally in an organised sequence; often they occur randomly or as compound events simultaneously, frequently and unexpectedly, sometimes tangentially to the main thrust of activity. The diary account is the story of the various journeys described in Appendix 7 intermingled with my own developments and learning, at school and at the

University of Bath. The Action Research journey of my Ph.D is woven quite intentionally into the fabric of the diary. This is an integral part of my own professional learning, and as such must be recorded as it happens.

Once again, to underline my contribution to the academy, I feel it is important to establish where I stand on the '*Action Research Continuum*'. Lomax and Parker (1995:120) suggest that:

It is possible to see Action Research as lying on a continuum which has at one end any practical enquiry which takes place in the 'real' world of practice (as in much of what is called Action Research in the United States). At the other end of this continuum one could place Action Research that is peculiarly personal endeavour which generates living educational theory (after McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead, 1996, pp. 123 – 47; Whitehead, 1989, pp. 41 – 52). This end of the continuum is concerned with praxis (simply definable as morally committed action).

I find myself differing slightly from McNiff *et al* (1996) in as much as my thesis is very much about practice, but contained within that practice is the recognition that the mechanics of that practice are the direct influence of my 'being' and who I am. Of course my moral standpoint, my values and my personal standards are an integral part of the process, but there is a component of what is happening that must also be present. To extend the contextualisation of Action Research further, Russell (1997:223) places the process exactly where I see it. He says:

- ***Action Research avoids any idea of research that might imply 'distance' or 'neutrality'.***
- ***Action Research happens 'in the swamp' where we live our day-to-day successes, frustrations, disappointments, and occasional miracles.***
- ***Action Research is something you do with, not on the students you teach and the teachers you support.***

The detail of the process has been discussed in Chapter 3, but this statement places me centrally in the process, which is just where I see myself. To restate the research question;

How can I as the Professional Development Manager working with teachers, support and enhance the learning and achievement of pupils in a whole school improvement process?

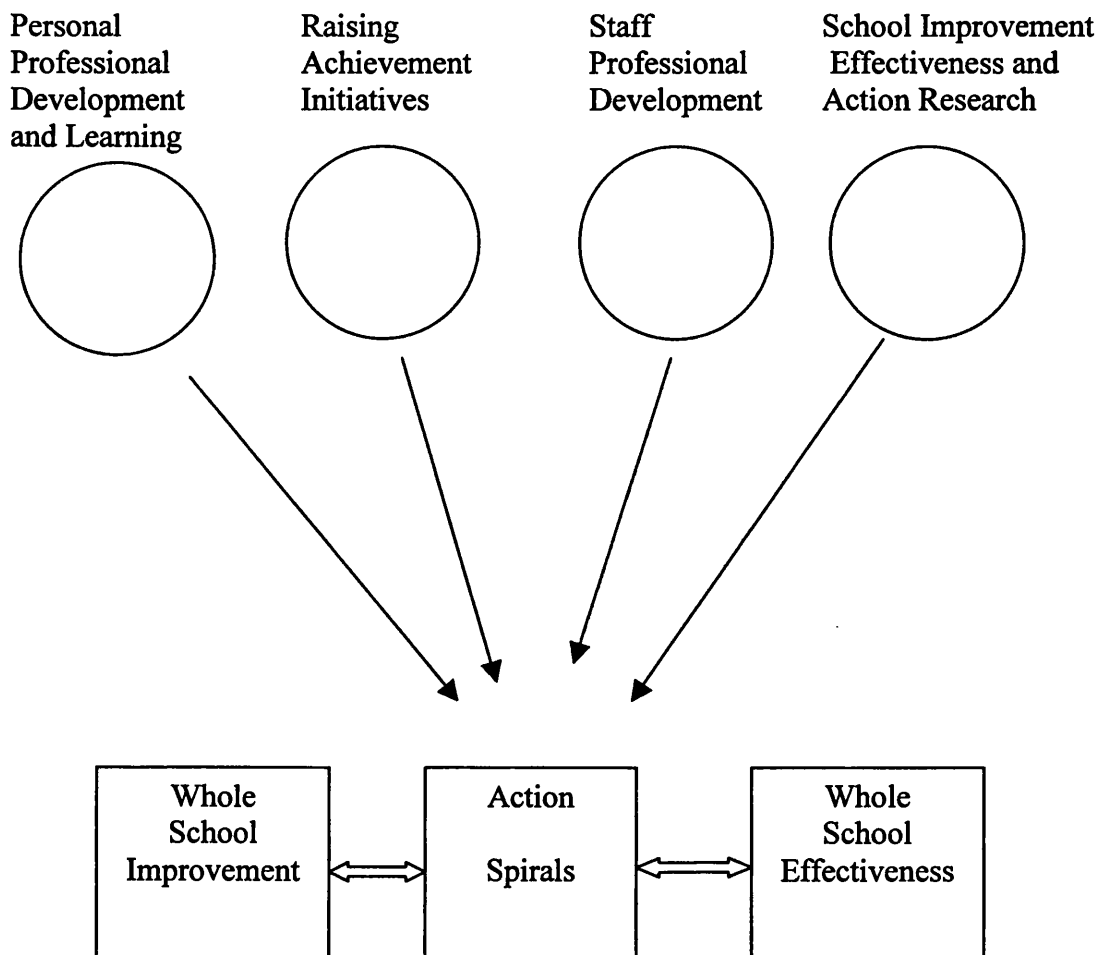
Again McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead (1996:37), who make the following ideas central to the approach, validate this position:

***I am the central person in my research.
I am asking a real question about a real issue, and I am hoping to move towards a possible solution.
I am starting from where I am.***

I am trying to bring about some improvement (remember – any improvement is still improvement, no matter how small).

Given the context, Figure 3 shows the relationship of actions and processes in place at the start of the research.

Figure 3: Some of the Action Research Spirals



These spirals coalesce as a part of the whole school improvement process. The individual Action Research spirals become interwoven and interlocked into the major Action Research spiral of school improvement. They are related to each other and me because I am the common link between the various components and the improvement processes. They are related to each other specifically by the effect that each of the spirals has on the other processes at work in the school.

To support the Action Research taking place in the school, the school based Action Research Group was formed. The rationale for its formation was to add some support to

staff undertaking Action Research in the school, and to communicate the research data to as wide and as informed an audience as possible.

School Improvement and School Effectiveness are discussed in historical detail in

Appendix 1. What I would like to sensitise the reader to is that as the diary entries are outlined, evidence of the synergy between School Improvement and School Effectiveness emerge. School Effectiveness is a term used in this thesis to describe those systems in the school that are established to bring about a change in the way the school operates and is managed. The intention of change in this area is that an increase in efficiency and effectiveness will bring about improvement in achievement.

School Improvement strategies are those initiatives that are taking place with the teachers and the pupils at classroom or individual level. Again, an improvement in pupil learning, classroom teaching or improvements in teaching skill will, it is suggested, lead to an improvement in pupil performance.

The diary

The purpose of the diary entries is two fold. Firstly it is an indicator of the Action Research Cycles as they unfold. Within the narrative is evidence of the improvement initiatives being initiated, and they support some of the claims for improvement being made. It is also data in its own right as a record of the life of the school, the work of the teachers in the school and my personal involvement with the processes. The full diary record is seen as **Appendix 8.** In this chapter I have included a selection of entries that illustrate the Action Research process taking place, the initial activities associated with the improvement initiatives and some feel for staffing issues. Some of the early diary entries are expanded upon in the narrative. This is to help the reader to understand how the improvement process started to gain momentum and to indicate the background to many of the initiatives. I am anxious to establish myself as a key participant in the improvement process, and many of the early entries show how I am undertaking my own personal development process as well as participating in the whole school process.

Some of the entries may not be initially seen as relevant to the overall issue of raising achievement. I have included them because many affect the way the staff in the school are either working or thinking at the time which in turn does affect what is taking place in the classroom. Before the record of the diary itself starts, I include here an index of initiatives and events associated with the raising of achievement that have taken place during the

research period 1995-1999. In-depth analysis is only undertaken on a small number of these initiatives, but a full portfolio is presented here to give the reader a full picture of the scale of the improvement process being undertaken. More information regarding the events will follow as part of the diary record, and the major initiatives are further expanded in Chapters 6 and 7. It will be noted from the diary record that at the start, many initiatives are put in place, and over time, the introduction of new innovations slows down and consolidation takes place. Evaluation and hard indicators of the success of these initiatives can be found and discussed in **Appendix 9**.

Index of Raising Achievement Initiatives 1995 – 1999

1. A Raising Achievement Working Party formed.
2. Raising Achievement Conference attended.
3. Development of First Term Reviews as a record of pupil personal targets achieved initiated.
4. Conference on School Self-Review attended.
5. Raising achievement included in Department Development Plans.
6. Self-esteem tests initiated as a method of identifying pupils in need of esteem and achievement raising.
7. Working party for Literacy and Oracy formed.
8. Bullying and its effects on achievement research started.
9. Appointment of a co-ordinator for raising achievement initiatives.
10. English Department starts research on reading and spelling in the school.
11. The Technical and Vocational Educational Initiative (T.V.E.I) embedded project with Bath University for Mathematics and Science started.
12. A 'Classroom Guide' to strategies for raising achievement issued.
13. Raising achievement working party re-directed.
14. Middle ability pupil's identification factors researched.
15. Development of new scheme in Mathematics for low and middle ability pupils started.
16. English and Technology join second tranche of T.V.E.I scheme.
17. Behaviour modification scheme for Yr. 8 and 9 pupils started.
18. School's Code of Behaviour modified.
19. Project '50' (50 pupils) career tracking project started.
20. Emerging grades in Yr. 10 initiated.
21. 'Underachieving boys' research started by English Department.

22. Drama Department uses drama as a way of increasing self-esteem and raising achievement.
23. Work on the 'good teacher' Alan Shelton starts.
24. C.A.Ts, as a predictor of performance research started.
25. Staff Development Day devoted to C.A.Ts is undertaken.
26. An audit of types of reading experience offered by different departments is researched.
27. Trainee teacher researches the effects of residential trips on self-esteem.
28. Analysis of intervention needs for the next Yr. 10 in view of poor academic performance predictions.
29. Links start to be made between C.A.Ts scores and self-esteem scores and how Form Tutors can use them.
30. A Staff Development Day on Raising Achievement held.
31. English Department issues a guide for all teachers on standards of achievement at different N.C. performance levels as a guide to extend middle ability pupils.
32. C.A.Ts scores made available to staff on the curriculum network.
33. Videos of practising teachers were taken with the intention of their being used in future staff development.
34. Setting procedures in Yr. 7 reviewed in the light of C.A.Ts scores.
35. Videos of teaching used in INSET for Maths Department.
36. A behaviour blitz on Yr. 9 who are detracting from the achievement of others, and interfering with the process of teaching.
37. Action Research Group formed.
38. Numeracy Working Party established.
39. Work on school ethos started.
40. SMT team building programme starts.
41. C.A.Ts testing is taken into the feeder primary schools.
42. Personal Development Plans (P.D. Ps) started for pupils including targets for achievement.
43. Raising pupil potential and attainment group formed in Swindon.
44. Yr. 9 attitudes to mathematics and learning research started.
45. Lifelong learning for all staff instituted.
46. Target setting development work started.
47. Research starts on the use of 'soft indicators' for middle ability pupils.
48. Year 10 and 11 mentoring initiative starts.
49. 'Able pupils' research starts.

50. Initiatives in departments for raising expectations in teaching and learning started.

Excerpts from the diary

I have tried to give the reader a flavour of a variety of activities that are going on in the school over the research period. It may seem a little disjointed, and the action cycles not obvious. They are there, and a full appreciation of them can be achieved by reading the complete version in **Appendix 8**. I have tried to guide the reader by '*signposting*' some of the entries. I have kept them in chronological order to give a feeling of continuity, but by doing so, it also gives a feeling of the non-linearity of the process. The story started in October 1995 and the initial development has been recorded in Chapter 1. The following entries continue the story.

Early in the improvement process

12.6.96 I attended a course in Sheffield on Raising Achievement. The main thrust of the conference encompassed the idea that in order to raise the achievement level of any child, the teacher had to have constant and direct contact with that child. In order to achieve this, the teacher had to be guided in classroom organisational terms to create time in the classroom to achieve this contact.

The start of the self esteem initiative

1.7.96 The minutes of the Lower School Pastoral Committee record an entry where a pupil in Yr. 7 had for the first time been put onto an Individual Education Plan (IEP) as a direct result of low self-esteem as measured by KMP a month earlier.

2.7.96 Second meeting between MAB and KMP with reference to self-esteem testing. After KMP had produced the information from the Yr 7 self-esteem tests, she produced a list of teachers who would be prepared to help with the using of the material. MAB/KMP need to invite them to support the programme of using the tests before Pencelli starts in November. The idea being that the Form Tutors can use the information from the self-esteem tests to make an initial assessment of the pupils in their tutor groups. Then, during the outdoor pursuits residential week at Pencelli and during the debriefing sessions afterward, they will be able to see how closely the test scores are to the reality of the pupils in the field.

5.7.96 The Yr.7 tutor team met to discuss the new 1996/7 intake, and the minutes from the meeting show that for the first time self-esteem was included into the folder of work to be covered during the induction days for these pupils.

3.9.96 Self-Esteem Tests. On the first day of the new term, I had a conversation with KMP re the results of the self-esteem tests carried out in June. She has published a list of pupils in Yr. 7 who have low esteem. This has been put on the staff notice boards, and already, form tutors from Year 7 have taken note and have started to work with those particular pupils.

The Senior Management drive for improvement

3.9.96 PKH at the SMT meeting asked me to be the SMT member responsible for the area for raising standard of achievement.

Some of the initiatives

4.9.96 T.V.E.I Embedded Project. The school already has two members of staff, EXB and GGS taking part in this initiative on raising achievement. It is organised by Bath University and is funded by some remnants from T.V.E.I funding. Two more HODs are keen to join - BMW and TEP. The school made a decision at SMT meeting to fund one more place if there was not sufficient funding within the existing system. Both HODs have stated that they will work on their developments even if they don't get onto the scheme. It does seem healthy that there are now two subjects, Maths and Science out of the three core subjects involved in the scheme. (English should also be involved, but the HOD has presented no paper or ideas or shown any great willingness to be involved.). This is an interesting adjunct to my meeting with SHR the Deputy Head of Department who was interested, on the same day.

The Senior Management drive for improvement

6.9.96 MAB meets with MXW to discuss the strategy for the ongoing development of the working party. This is presenting problems because the chair EXB does not seem to have many ideas, and I feel that I am pushing from behind. This is a management strategy on my behalf as the continuation of the work is dependent on the survival of that group. I suggested to MXW that the next step is to get all parties who are working on any of the projects to give a paper and report to the next meeting, and that from then on regular updated reports are given. It is crucial that all the enthusiasm that is present at the moment

continues. One problem that is emerging is that there is no overall picture of the developments that are taking place, and which parts of the school are involved. It is crucial that this is co-ordinated if we are to prevent duplication of work or leave obvious holes.

The Alan Shelton vignette

24.9.96 I have arranged to meet with ANS to discuss his teaching style.

24.9.96 I interviewed Annie Martin and Shane Morton of Yr. 12 about their feelings regarding ANS as a teacher, what positive and negative attributes he has and what makes him a good teacher.

26.9.96 I met with Nicholas Butler who has now left the school to discuss the same aspects as the interview above to try and triangulate the feelings of the maths group.

My development and learning

17.10.96 I started to ask colleagues if they would be part of a school validation group for my research. MXW, EXB, GGS, were happy to be involved.

The Alan Shelton vignette

12.11.96 Took the first video of ANS at work with his Yr. 10 set 2 Maths group. This first video is of him working on an individual level with the group who are doing project work. I intend to video him later undertaking a more didactic lesson.

15.11.96 I arranged for members of the Yr. 10 maths set to review the video and give me their impressions of ANS as a teacher.

19.11.96 Review of video as suggested on 15.11.96 took place with 7 members of the Yr. 10 group present.

The self-esteem initiative

10.12.96 I had a meeting with Jo Glasson one of the Novice Teachers from Bath University who has an interest in researching an aspect of self-esteem for her Educational Study. I have commissioned her to investigate the effect that the Yr. 7 residential trip to Pencelli has on self-esteem, as measured against the results of the tests completed in June

1996 and the subsequent reviews made by the Form Tutors using that data. This work will take place in January 1997.

The end of the Christmas Term 1996

Many of the cycles are now in the implementation stage, with some moving into the evaluation phase.

The Senior Management drive for improvement

6.1.97 The school hits a level of despondency; the Year 9 C.A.T results have just arrived. They are much more detailed than last year and hold massive amounts of prognostic information about estimated grades at GCSE. A quick analysis of this data has shown to the SMT and the Curriculum and Pupil Support Department (CAPS) that the school's percentage of pupils expected to achieve 5 GCSE grades at C or above is only 36%. This is a potentially disastrous situation for the pupils. Such a low estimated performance at GCSE would have a dramatic effect on their career prospects. The school recognised that some remedial improvement strategies had to be put into place to help these pupils achieve more than they were being predicted. Also from the data, there appears to be a large group of pupils in the high 'average' group i.e. potential GCSE grade D candidates. This is the group of pupils that the school will need to identify very clearly and start intervention work with, in order to move them onto a grade 'C' and therefore alter the low percentage prediction. It is important that we start work now in order to have sufficient time to bring about a significant change in achievement. Later on that day, the Year 7 C.A.T results arrived, and were analysed. The prognoses for the estimated grades for this group is 43% A* - C but of course they are much further away from the examination in terms of time, and the school has had little time to exert any 'Value Added' influence on them. (They took the tests in November 1996, 3 months after joining the school.)

9.1.97 During the SMT meeting on this day, some of the issues raised above were discussed and it was decided that the situation was so serious that a full-blown analysis of the situation was needed, and that a full meeting devoting all attention to this one item was required. To this meeting will be invited the HOD for CAPS and the Year 9 Head of Year. This meeting is to take place on 13.1.97.

The self-esteem initiative

10.1.97 MAB meets with KMP to discuss the progress on self-esteem and the inter-linking with the C.A.T results. KMP has started to analyse the Year 7 CAT results in order to integrate them with the previous work done on self-esteem. The validation of the test process starts, and the Form Tutors are informed of any problems in their Tutor Groups.

My involvement as the Professional Development Manager

10.4.97 Meet with Headteacher to discuss staff development. During the conversation I confirm that I will be encouraging the staff to become teacher researchers and the Head is fully in favour.

19.5.97 MAB talks to the Headteacher about the role of the Development Co-ordinator. At this point there is a dramatic change in the story line. The Headteacher corrected the title to that of Professional Development Manager. This puts a totally different emphasis on the role. Gone now is the concept of gentle persuasion and delicate suggestion to colleagues about appropriate developments that they might like to consider, and in comes a more proactive emphasis. I am interpreting the word manager as a process whereby there is a much greater degree of pressure to be brought to bear on individuals to undertake training and development and an implicit requirement for me to actively manage the whole process which will require both monitoring and evaluation.

The self-esteem initiative

20.5.97 MAB meets with KMP to review the C.A.Ts and self esteem work to date, and to plan for the next steps. Overall it would seem that the tests were fairly accurate in their predictions and useful enough for the Form Tutors to have worked with the children at risk helping to raise their self-esteem over the year. Pencelli seemed to permanently change and raise the pupils' self esteem. This altered the relationship between the pupils who went to the centre and the staff who attended, with a very positive bond which developed into the classroom.

My involvement as the Professional Development Manager

22.5.97 PKH issues his strategy framework for all staff. Action Research is now included in MAB's job description.

22.5.97 MAB talks to a number of staff who are engaged in various forms of research and then decides to formulate an Action Research Group in the school. The invitation paper is written and is circulated to all interested members. BT is particularly keen to be a part of this group and volunteers to lead part of the session by preparing the group in the reading of 'Research Papers'. The necessary arrangements are made to meet immediately after half term.

24.5.97 Half Term

2.6.97. The initial meeting of the school based Action Research Group is held. Five colleagues attended and the apologies from the remainder lead me to believe that it will be a viable group.

My development and learning

2.6.97. PKH confirms with me that the Governors have agreed that I will be called the Assistant Headteacher, together with the pay and conditions of service equal to the post.

Staffing issues

4.6.97 PKH addresses all of the staff both teaching and non-teaching and firms up the staffing structure and his plans for the future. He is still willing to hear any more points of view before he sets it in concrete. There are still some staff who feel aggrieved about the structure, but I do feel now that more staff are feeling happy, and conversations are happening about how they personally feel excited about the start of term in September. What is clear is that the staff who are going are now beginning to inflict a psychological hold on progress. No one including myself wants the two deputies in particular to feel that their organisations were anything but successful, but at the same time those of us who are remaining wish to do the tasks in different ways. As a consequence, I find myself in particular making interim plans until September when they have left in order to bring about the new organisations.

The self-esteem initiative

10.6.97 The first group of the next Year 7 cohort visits the school for their induction visit. They are given the self-esteem tests by KMP.

Staffing issues

18.6.97. There is a general feeling of buoyancy amongst the staff. CWD quotes '*the staff are feeling bullish*'. 20 of the staff have new posts of responsibility and this will be very helpful to the school in driving it forwards. Both GGS and ANS have told me separately how much they value the appointment of the new Curriculum Co-ordinators team and how successful they feel this team will be. There is great concern particularly from the Lower School Pastoral Team about the appointment of AJP as the Head of Lower School. Some of this I feel sure is a feeling of being upset because they did not get the job, but there is, I think, a feeling of personal enmity against the man. This is another major management issue to be resolved if the school is to settle down and move forewords. MAB has agreed to work with ANS and AJP to 'soften the blow'.

My development and learning

30.6.97 Staff Development Day - MAB has planned it. At the start of the day MAB praised the staff involved for their impressive performance at the recent interviews. This is a considered act of management by MAB to keep the current buoyant feeling going.

Staffing issues

30.6.97 I note the continuing feel of enthusiasm from the staff and conversations that indicate that most staff are looking forward to the start of the Autumn Term.

September 1997 - The start of the new academic year

The year starts with the new management structure in place, and the five period day is also a new innovation. There had been a great deal of concern expressed at the end of the previous term on the effect that the 5 period day would have on staff, and the consequent effect on the quality of teaching and achievement for the pupils.

The senior management drive for improvement

22.9.97 At the SMT meeting there is a long discussion about the value of the Raising Achievement Working Party. It was recognised that it was no longer fulfilling the role and the conclusion reached was that its useful life had probably come to an end. It was suggested that the Curriculum Co-ordinators took it to their curriculum teams and discussed it with them. MAB offered to collate and publicise any information produced in the area. It was also suggested that it become a standing item on all curriculum school agendas. This is the end of a significant research cycle for the Raising Achievement

Working Party. It has done its job in getting the thrust of improvement initiatives underway and it is appropriate that it now ceases to exist in its current form.

The self-esteem initiative

5.11.97 I meet with KMP to update on current state of play with C.A.Ts and self-esteem.

My development and learning

5.11.97 I try out a questionnaire that I have devised for the measurement of 'Soft Indicators' on some girls in a Year 8 class and it seems to be successful.

My development and learning

19.12.97 MAB gets his Lower 6th groups to undertake the questionnaire on his teaching style and personality statements.

The Alan Shelton vignette

2.2.98 MAB revisits the Maths group of middle ability pupils whom he videoed last year with ANS. He asks them to contribute to a further discussion on their progress in Maths with ANS, and 10 pupils are very happy to help. He will arrange a meeting for after half term.

25.2.98 I held another interview with ANS to continue to develop the work with him. I am now at a stage where I need to know what his feelings are one year on from our initial conversations.

4.9.98 I meet with Annie Martin to continue our discussions about Alan Shelton. It is now a year since I spoke to her and another student and I am interested in how and if her feelings have altered during that time. She agrees that we can tape the interview. Unfortunately the other student involved, Shane Morton was ill and could not add her contribution

The Yr. 11 Mentoring Vignette

6.5.98 I have the final interview with Amy Hossack. She is one of my Year 11 Mentoring Scheme students. I gather her opinions and views about the process.

11.5.98 I meet with ten Year 11 students to tape their feelings about the Year 11 Mentoring Project. Their feelings both positive and negative are important if the school is to undertake the process again next year.

My involvement as the Professional Development Manager

7.7.98 Action Research Group meets with the guest speaker being Jack Whitehead from Bath University. Jack outlines the current thinking in the field of Action Research, and gives his view on how the current work of the school in raising achievement is located within this movement.

Staffing issues

2.9.98 The Autumn Term 1998 starts for all teaching staff with a Staff Development Day organised by myself. At that meeting, the Headteacher reaffirms the school mission statement and the professional thrust for the academic year. That is, the process of raising standards in teaching and learning. He also congratulated the staff on the outstanding achievements of the examinations in 1998. The highlight has to be the two students in Year 13 who achieved six 'A' level subjects at Grade A. A first in the history of the school. The staff seems to be back from the holidays with a purposeful buzz about them. The computer software has let the preparation processes down, however and there are no timetables available for pupils or solid information about rooms to teach in. This is going to add to the usual start of term pressure, but at the moment the staff seem to be taking it in good heart. Apart from this IT hitch, the term starts with order and purpose.

The Yr. 11 Mentoring Vignette

8.9.98 I start the process of collecting data from the outcome of the Year 11 mentoring process. Several staff are interested in the outcome of this project. I confirm with the Headteacher that I will produce a paper to highlight the process, evaluate the results and take the recommendations forward to start thinking about the next cohort. In essence this is the end of one Action Research cycle and the start of the next.

My development and learning

21.9.98 This heralds a new start to a cycle in my own professional development. A researcher from Bath University, Mrs Susan Gibbs, has arranged to observe me teach and reflect on my teaching style and methodology. This is in connection with her own Doctoral thesis, but I see it as an opportunity for the validation of some of my earlier personal

statements about myself. The outcome should provide triangulation for my subjective value judgements. She observes me teach a Year 13 Biology class and spends 2 hours with me analysing the outcome of that lesson and my responses to events that occurred. This learning focus will be of great value to me.

14.10.98 During a professional development conversation with MJC, I find myself in a position where I am justifying to my colleague why I am undertaking a Ph.D. It is framed in the context of his own professional development and why he should undertake more qualifications, but he asks me the question. This is an emotional and emotive issue for me. For the first time with a colleague, I express the real force that is driving me to complete this project. It is to do with my personal self-doubt about my intellectual abilities, and my need to publicly prove that I am capable of performing at the highest possible intellectual level. What is reassuring and significant are his words in reply. *'Mike, you don't have to prove anything to anybody, you are perfectly accepted as the professional you are and well respected in the school'*. In terms of my own self-esteem this is a momentous moment for me, and one that has secured me in the task of continuing with the research. I have received validation from a colleague, which I hope will now put to rest the nagging spectre of self-doubt that has dogged my educational development since childhood. A major personal breakthrough - Hurrah!

The Yr. 11 Mentoring Vignette

15.12.98 The concept of Year 11 Mentoring for students on the C/D borderline is raised again at the SMT meeting. In view of the criticisms I raised with the management of the process last year, which is discussed in Chapters 7 and **Appendix 2**, the team agrees to manage the initiative differently this time round. This is the end of one cycle and a definite start to the next after re-planning has taken place.

Development continues, but in order to start the process of writing up the thesis, I stop recording my diary at this point. There is no significance in the date except that the Autumn Term has come to an end. The action cycles will continue.

Some concluding thoughts for the chapter

In keeping this diary, I am conscious that not only is it a record of some of the activities taking place in the life of the school, but it does also outline the cycles of the Action Research process. Each initiative has its own cycle and even though they rotate at different speeds, they all fall within the larger cycle of improvement in the school. In addition, it

allows for comment on my moods and the feeling for the attitudes of my colleagues at various times during the research period and at different times in the year.

This chronology is a literal record of events as they occur. It allows the reader to absorb a flavour of the atmosphere in the school over time and shows how the mood and morale affect the development activities taking place. It also emphasises the fact that these developments while narrated in a linear manner do not occur as such. They are often disjointed and unconnected.

The Action Research cycles displayed at the start of the chapter show clearly how the diary fits together in terms of its cyclic nature. The text of the diary enunciates the role that I play as the researcher, but more important the role of teacher and manager I have played during the span of the research.

An analysis of the diary shows that early on in the research period, I was heavily involved in many of the initiatives involved in the raising of achievement, particularly for middle ability children. As I changed my role in the school, and took on even more managerial responsibility, the emphasis in the diary entries changes. It now starts to show how my Professional Development Manager role becomes the more important focus of my activity. This is partly due to the change in responsibility, but also due to the other changes taking place in the school. More staff are being empowered and encouraged to undertake roles and responsibilities in relation to the raising of achievement. This is in line with the culture of the Improving the Quality of Education for All (IQEA) project in as much as it provides and encourages sustainability of the improvement process within the school. In 2002, the Mentoring process is still operating and the pupil numbers included in the project have grown. Self-esteem testing and action from the data achieved is also firmly established in the working practice of Yr. 7.

Caution about the diary is registered here. As recognised earlier, bias is the trap waiting for the unwary. What I record or chose to ignore is of course always a personal value judgement and so I want to record that improvement activities are still taking place in the school, but that my particular focus has moved slightly and the entries reflect this.

My learning and personal development continues and affects the future focus and guides my actions, in particular, the management of staff in new areas. In addition I undertake a

wider involvement outside the school and represent the school in other forums. I hope that my holding of the two Logics, those of both the Propositional and Dialectical form have been evident in these diary recordings. What I have continued to learn is the skill of holding all the initiatives in place in my mind while having the one thought, the overall improvement process.

What I am now doing is helping my colleagues both teaching and non-teaching to improve their own performance. I would like to think that, as a product of this process, there would be a measurable effect on the achievement of pupils in the school. The most overt measure of an improvement in performance will be an increase in achievement at the key stage examinations and these results are discussed in **Appendix 9**. There is evidence in this diary of School Effectiveness, School Improvement and Action Research working together. The processes of School Effectiveness and School Improvement will be discussed in Chapter 5. My involvement within these processes emerges from the diary. The development of my living educational theory in relation to my learning and the whole school improvement process is revealed as I use the diary format as part of my explanation and descriptive process.

The next chapter will illustrate some current research in School Effectiveness and School Improvement and its relationship to the work of the school.

Chapter 5 - School Effectiveness And School Improvement: Some Current Perspectives.

In this chapter some aspects of research in the two fields, School Improvement and School Effectiveness since 1996 are documented. The research discussed is related to my work as an Action Researcher and to the improvement activities at St John's which are the focus of this thesis.

An historical overview

The historical provenance of the School Effectiveness and School Improvement fields is discussed in **Appendix 1**. This work has been used as the underpinning referent that has guided and influenced my Action Research. The key ideas from these fields have acted as a seedbed for my own research. I have not attempted to take forward the theoretical background of the School Effectiveness and School Improvement fields, as this is not the focus of the thesis. What I have done is used Action Research to develop my living educational theory and used insights from the fields of School Effectiveness and School Improvement as the vehicle to show how my learning has been integrated into my work in the school with my colleagues.

Some current research activities in School Improvement and School Effectiveness related to my research

Reynolds (1996) is of the clear opinion that the two fields are merging into each other, but continue to work on informing each other's practice. This '*merging of perspectives*' is supported by the work of Hopkins, Reynolds and Stoll in Gray *et al* (1996). I wish to use some of the current research work to illustrate how the improvement initiatives at St John's are very much in line with these research findings. In March 2002 the Headteacher raised the issue of creating a new management structure with the Senior Management Team. He plans to develop an even more flattened management structure than has been in operation through out the research period to date. This new structure will involve 'project managers' who will have temporary positions and financial remuneration to bring about a particular development in an area of the school system such as the curriculum, or the implementation of a national strategy. This is very much in line with the Hopkins (2001) idea of '*dispersed leadership*'. These project managers will form small groups of cross-subject staff with a

range of experience and will perform the same role as the 'cadre' group seen in the IQEA project. This sort of development in the school is only possible because of a change in the learning environment that has taken place over the last 6 years. Staff and pupils have grown into the frame of mind where a focus on teaching and learning has now become predominant. The '*internal capacity*' for change Stoll (1999 and 1999b) continues in a sustained manner. St John's has recognised, to use Hopkins (2001:121) words, that;

Top-down direction and institutional hierarchies are antithetical to democracy in action. Multiple partnerships, with variable leadership offer a more appropriate set of structural norms, and are more likely to impact upon classroom and student learning.

This occurs when there is recognition within the system of a continuing need for professional development to enable leadership development internally. This recognition was made by the Headteacher when he appointed me as Professional Development Manager in 1997.

In the Editorial to the special September issue of the British Educational Research Journal (2001:387), there is a clear indication that classroom research data is beginning to emerge. This issue focuses entirely on some of the current School Effectiveness and School Improvement research. The editorial notes that '*Schools are not necessarily the only focus of analysis; for example, significant classroom and departmental effects are highlighted*'. I am delighted to see this as it gives more academic weight, credibility and validation to my research undertaken at classroom level at St John's. Research on teacher and Headteacher development, leadership, curriculum development for the C21st, extensions and additions to the IQEA work internationally are all brought up to date in this edition.

Teachers and professional development

Research continues in the professional development of both teachers and Headteachers. There is an increasing emphasis on the need for involvement and development of the teacher in the educational process. Stoll (1999b: 516) establishes thirteen principles that will encourage '*the developing of capacity from within*'. Many of these principles closely involve teacher learning. Learning not just about teaching strategies or subject knowledge, but also about the need to have an expectation about pupils that '*all pupils can learn*'. That a '*positive climate*', '*development friendly norms*', and '*understanding of the process of change*' a '*broadening of leadership*' and '*continuing professional development*' are all responsibilities of the teacher and in turn have to be learnt. Theakston *et al* (2001) showed

how there was recognition of the need for the professional development of teachers in the newly formed Educational Action Zones. Indeed, second round funding for these initiatives was only allocated following the establishment of teacher professional development. The IQEA project in Sharnbrook Upper School and Community College (Hopkins, 2001) showed the success of positive teacher development and how the model of *'dispersed leadership'* can work very successfully to develop both pupil and teacher learning. This scheme involved the concept of peer coaching of teachers, a concept that St John's has also found to be very effective. MacBeath and Mortimore (2001) support the concept of *'critical friends'* which again is a venture that St John's has been encouraging, and which the outcome from the first vignette, is an example.

Headteacher professional development

The concept of leadership styles and *'transformational leadership'* Leithwood *et al* (1999) is discussed further in Chapter 9, but continues to be recognised by Hopkins (2001) as the type of leadership best suited to school improvement. Hopkins (2001:134) offers two other leadership models that he recognises add to a *'moving and learning school's'* improvement process. The models he recognises are those of *'instructional and dispersed leadership'*. These models allow for a variety of different teachers to take key roles in the improvement process, giving personal satisfaction and professional development to those involved. Again, examples of these models are discussed in the thesis as being part of the improvement initiatives and change that have taken place at St Johns.

Research in the School Improvement and School Effectiveness field has been concerned with looking at the organisation within schools. Bennett and Harris (1999) observe that if schools are to continue to improve, then part of this research must be to focus attention on the idea of *'organisational theory'*. They argue that despite recent claims of synergy between the two fields, both cling to their traditional outlook and research methods. In the opinion of Bennett and Harris, there has not been the synergy that others claim. They claim that a synergy of the two fields can only be achieved by developing theories or models that link the two fields. This can be achieved, they suggest, if schools pay attention to *'organisational theory'*, and take into account the dimension of *'power'*, (Bennett and Harris 1999:534-537). They go on to argue that power is *'integral to both cultural and organisational change'*. They make the point that *'everything which is achieved within an organisation is the result of some kind of interaction between its members'*. The distribution of power in the organisation is both a consequence and a determinate of

structure and culture. Power can be used to exert pressure using physical resources, knowledge, economic, or normative power (interrelationships). The interrelationship between the use of these forms of power and the individuals within the organisation are the bedrock from which the organisation will develop. It is the judicious and careful management of this power that determines whether the organisation moves forward or stagnates. The leaders/managers are often holding the majority of power bases in an organisation, and it is the sensitivity with which the power is used that will retard or encourage the growth and development of both staff and pupils. Bennett and Harris (1999) put forward the argument that to develop an understanding of the power distribution in schools enables us to appreciate why some schools or some factors in schools lead to improvement while in other schools the opposite happens. The IQEA project (Hopkins *et al* 1994) was reliant on the recognition that an appropriate management of the power bases was a prerequisite for improvement to take place. While the study of the power bases at St John's has not been undertaken, a reflective observation would lead me to suggest that power was used appropriately by all to enable the advancements that have been made to take place. Due care of the 'power issue' was recorded in Chapter 3 when discussing data collection and the venues for interviews.

Sergiovanni (1995) suggests that effective heads should work with individuals and groups to bring about and manage change. Telford (1996) supports teacher professional development and recognises the Headteacher as part of that development process, *'collaborative leadership is the most certain way of ensuring the vision of the school is realised'*.

Telford's sentiments are echoed by Day *et al* (2001) who also recognised the importance of the position the head has in modelling the values and beliefs that he or she wants the school to hold as an organisation. Their research tries to identify the components of effective schools using the eyes of the people who witness them from inside, such as the voices of pupils. It does not just rely on anecdotal or autobiographical evidence from the Headteacher. There is an echo here for me as I have tried to undertake the same form of triangulation with pupils and staff for the vignettes in this thesis. Day *et al* (2001: 22) also recognise that effective school's Headteachers have moved *'beyond transformational leadership because the existing theories do not adequately reflect the current practice of an effective head'*. In such schools, with such leaders, Day *et al* (2002) noted that there is a change from a person centred philosophy with an emphasis on improving teaching and

learning to a values laden, achievement oriented, people centred approach. The research showed that such Heads invested in others in order to lead the school. The flattening of the management structure at St John's in 1997 and again in 2002 is a good example of this at work in the school.

The development of the Headteacher as the '*leading learner*' (Barth 1990) continues to be encouraged by the TTA. This development is supported by the National Professional Qualification for Headteachers (NPQH), the Leadership Programme for Serving Headteachers (LPSH) and the Headteacher's Leadership and Management Programmes (HEADLAMP). The Head has to be a central part of the effective school leading the school improvement processes from the front. At St John's, the Headteacher completed the LPSH two years ago.

The school context, ethos and environment have been the subject of School Effectiveness and School Improvement research by Clement and Vandenberghe (2001). Again, the research has shown that teachers' professional development is not just associated with personal characteristics, but also related to the context within which development is taking place. MacBeath (2001) confirmed that the most effective teacher development took place when conditions of trust, openness and collegiality were in place. Development in an environment where the '*critical friend*' or '*peer mentor*' (Joyce *et al* 1999) was in a position to offer constructive advice, which would be received with openness, that accepts teacher learning. The teacher learner is now firmly embedded as an important component of the learning school.

International research

Hopkins and Reynolds ((2001:460) produced a critique of some international research in aspects of School Improvement and School Effectiveness. Their paper indicates that many projects such as those in Chicago, California, Kentucky and Victoria Australia had only limited success.

Despite the dramatic increase in education reform in most OECD countries, their impact upon overall levels of student achievement is widely seen as not having been as successful as anticipated.

They only experienced limited success in their analysis because the initiatives did not link teaching and learning with the capacity development and external support. These factors were identified by Stoll (1999) as necessary, and I would suggest that at St John's they

have been addressed, leading to one school's improvement. Current initiatives in Hopkins and Reynolds (2001) *'third age'* are building on the analysis from these earlier initiatives and are proving to be more successful. The Halton Board of Education Initiative in Canada and the Dutch National School Improvement Project are examples that are cited by Hopkins (2001) and Teddlie and Reynolds (2000) as showing successful improvement characteristics. Schreerens (2001) outlines development in three other major School Improvement/School Effectiveness projects. They are the Primary Education Quality Improvement Project (PEQIP) being undertaken in Indonesia, the Primer Estudio Internacional Comparativo (PEIC: UNESCO 1998) taking place in 13 Latin American countries and the Basic and Occupational Education and Training Project taking place in Thailand. These three studies involved vast numbers of schools and were focussed on aspects of School Effectiveness and School Improvement. UNESCO's International Commission on Education for the C21st has focussed on developing a thorough process that embraces the seizing of learning opportunities throughout life to enable schools to change and adapt as their society changes around them. They developed the four principles of *'learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be'* (Delors *et al*, 1996: 86). The new (2001) Yr 7 Curriculum project at St John's is attempting to emulate these four principles and is modelled on the RSA Opening Minds Project, (Baylis, 1999). Associated with this development of pupil learning are the 9 features of *'environments that support meaningful learning'* developed by Darling Hammond (1997). This work recognises that learning by pupils and teachers together in an appropriate environment will lead to school improvement.

In Canada, the Manitoba School Improvement Programme (MSIP) has been going since 1991, and Harris and Young (2000) draw some comparisons between that programme and the IQEA project. Both continue in a number of different schools in both countries and although they are different, some comparisons can be made. The IQEA as recorded in detail in **Appendix 1** involves a 'bottom up' approach and is premised on teacher development and on the school's capacity for development. The MSIP involving 31 schools draws on the professional knowledge of teachers rather than the expertise of academic or research evidence. It differs from the IQEA in a number of ways. Funding is given directly to the schools, the support is given from external agencies and external evaluation is undertaken. There is less control over the research undertaken in this project than in the IQEA project. Harris and Young (2000:41) note that:

Both MSIP and IQEA are more than just school improvement projects. They provide opportunities for teachers to form exactly the type of collaborative culture that it has been shown leads to improvements in teaching and learning.

While the focus is slightly different in the two projects, the use of school staff and pupils is the key to attaining authentic data. St John's is anxious to encourage and emulate that approach. The vignettes in Chapters 6 and 7 will allow the reader to understand how and what the school has attempted to do, and the rationale of the approach which mirrors these two initiatives. They will show how I have been involved as an educator and Professional Development Manager and how my learning developed into my living educational theory. The data achieved from these vignettes will be used by the school to improve the process of learning for all and by all.

This brief interlude brings to the reader my current understanding of the position of the School Effectiveness and School Improvement activities nationally and internationally. All the studies and research projects point to the importance of professional development of teachers and Headteachers and the imperative of developing Stoll's (1999) '*internal capacity*'.

Stoll (1999:3) helps the reader to understand that the 'real way forward' in improvement terms is to develop the school's '*internal capacity*' to '*engage in and sustain continuous learning of teachers and the school itself for the purpose of enhancing student learning*'. My role as Professional Development Manager is to both facilitate and encourage that development to take place. I would argue that St John's as a school has and is achieving this state of activity, and the staff and pupils are collectively sensitised to be willing partners in the process. That position though important is not the full story however. My thesis is recognising that School Effectiveness and School Improvement is more than a technical activity. It should also contain, to use Goodson's (2001:1) words, '*the personal missions and commitments that underpin the teacher's sense of vocationalism and caring professionalism*'. Goodson argues that it is not sufficient to just improve on the technical aspects of School Improvement, such as clear outline of objectives, rigorous testing activities and ensuring that teachers are accountable for their actions. The human face, the teacher and his personality are also part of the equation.

Goodson (2001: 1) argues for the inclusion of personality in the equation:

We can over stress this growing technisation element which is far from universal, and we can overstate the attack on the teacher's sense of vocation. Nonetheless,

what is irrefutable is that there has been little work on the 'personality of change'. In very few instances have school reforms or change theories been promulgated which place personal development and change as central 'building blocks' in the process. Instead, changes have been pursued in ways that seem to insist that this will happen, in spite of the teacher's personal beliefs and missions. All too often, the 'personality of change' has been seen as the 'stumbling block' of real reform, rather than as a crucial 'building block'.

I fully support the concept of personal development. At the heart of this thesis is the *'personal beliefs and missions'* of one teacher, me. As part of the improvement processes at St John's, the school embraces the Goodson concept of a *'new professional'* teacher who is technically competent together with the *'old professional'* ideology *'where professionalism is expressed and experienced as more than just a job, but as a caring vocationalism'* (Goodson 2001:4). The school demands technical excellence in its teaching staff but must also engender the *'old professional'* ideals if the best of improvement processes is to be achieved. From my subjective view point as a middle aged teacher, new entrants into the profession need help and guidance to blend a sense of vocationalism and caring into their technically excellent teaching activities. This is an essential part of a teacher's professional development, and as the Professional Development Manager it is an important aspect of my role. This ideal adds value and weight to Vignette 1 described in detail in Chapter 6. The danger for the complacent school or the school which does not have a developing *'internal capacity'* Goodson (2001:8) argues, is that:

..the 'old professionals' (in this specific case, mainly the elders) kept their professional knowledge to themselves and the chain of professional transmission was broken - the 'layers of unquantifiable knowledge, acquired through years of experience' remained untransmitted to the new generation of teachers. The school suffered 'corporate memory loss'.

It is development and integration of processes in the school to prevent this loss of knowledge and experience as older teachers leave the profession, that part of this thesis addresses. It is the recognition of the importance of teachers' personal values and beliefs, together with the accumulated experience and wisdom and the need to pass it on that the research was undertaken. Hargreaves and Fullan (1999) reinforce the passing on of this experience with their suggestions for teacher *'peer mentoring'*, and a strong connection and application of this is found in Vignette 1 in Chapter 6. Improvement will occur if the school can develop openness where teachers share experience and knowledge with each other.

Another aspect of school improvement is the recognition, in West-Burnham's (2001:5) terms, *'that it is not just what schools do that is significant - it is how they are'*. It is the

development of *'how they are'* that has been recorded for St John's in this thesis. West-Burnham challenges the idea that school improvement is an end in itself. He does not see the current educational position as the end, but as part of the transition to a new form of educative process. He sees the purpose of schools and the practices in them changing. This change is driven by a need to recognise that the educational process of the last 150 years is now outdated. What is needed *'is a different view about the nature of things' with regard to the nature of schooling and educating as social processes'*, (West-Burnham 2001:10). He sees transformation as an intermediate stage in the process of moving from improving schools to an educational renaissance where education is very different, but prepares society for life in the C21st. If this educational renaissance is to take place, then the role of leading that process will be incumbent on all members of the institution who have influence but particularly the Headteacher. Its development will need to be led not managed, and Stoll's (1999) internal capacity is highlighted as an imperative.

In responding to the literature, I will now show how St John's has approached the task of school improvement, and how it has related to the recommendations and points made in the literature.

Work at St John's as a 'moving and learning school'

I propose to link the historical literature and current research with the work being undertaken at St John's. Links will be made between the work of Hopkins *et al* (1994) and the IQEA project, Caldwell and Spinks (1988) collaborative school concept, the moving and learning school of Rosenholtz (1989) and the implication of Fullan's caution about initiative overload noted below. Fullan (1992 a: 1) notes that overload of innovation can be counter-productive to the whole raising achievement process because:

'Overload fosters dependency. Then one's actions are shaped by the actions and directions of others. Innovation overload is one of the most serious and endemic problems faced by the educational system. Unless we can rationalise and sequence our change efforts, we will drain the system of vitality and the goal of school improvement will continue to elude us'.

That is certainly a feeling identified by the staff of the school. One of the processes that I feel I need to manage carefully is the implementation of initiatives. The staff at St John's is unique and having been at the school for 27 years, I am aware of the specific characteristics of the body as a whole. I have learnt that too much change too soon brings antagonism and resistance.

At St John's I feel we are part of the '*moving and learning process*'; change is planned, and is taking place. Some of those who should be involved are, and those who are not yet convinced must be won over before the total change can be considered as successful and the raising of achievement, the '*raison d'être*', is accomplished. Hopkins *et al* (1994: 4) advocates and supports Barth's approach and states:

As outsiders to a school, when we engage in school improvement activities we are concerned to work with rather than work on schools. Barth's assumptions lead us to some liberating ways of thinking about change. Schools and those who live out their daily lives within them, are no longer the victims of change but can take more control of the process.

Hopkins *et al*'s (1994: 7) work with the IQEA project indicates ways of working that have been adapted for the work being undertaken at St John's.

IQEA works from the assumption that schools are most likely to strengthen their ability to provide enhanced outcomes for all pupils when they adopt ways of working that are consistent with their own aspirations as well as the current reform agenda.

The concept of the '*collaborative school*' as proposed by Caldwell and Spinks (1988) is the ideal where all involved are working towards a common goal, and all the systems and processes in the school are collectively formulated to that end. If it is managed sensitively then the staff is very positive and extremely professional in the implementation of initiatives. New ideas can and do emerge from members of the staff and from discussions at all levels from the SMT downwards. These are encouraged, and staff are invited to take ownership of them and follow them through as strategies. For ideas that I wish to integrate into the system, one of the things I have learnt in my managerial education and is confirmed by research is that ownership and involvement in the process is paramount. I now, as a conscious strategy, manage new initiatives by sowing the seed of an idea. I then let it germinate in the minds of the target staff and then raise it again at a later date. By then I feel that colleagues have had a chance to explore the idea in their minds and are more ready to accept change.

It is evident from the strategies being undertaken, and with the culture and the ethos that is prevalent in the school, St John's is moving in the right direction on its '*improvement journey*'. Such ideals as multiple measures of pupil outcome, high levels of methodological sophistication and multiple levels of data from pupil intake are all being used as data about the improvement process. This thesis is looking at how St John's has firmly grasped the nettle of the need for a '*bottom up rather than a top down approach*' to school improvement and the raising of achievement. Today's term for this improvement activity is

the 'value added' factor. The movement has continued to investigate the role schools play in the process of educating a child. The introduction of league tables into the equation has accentuated the importance of achievement for the school as an organisation as well as highlighting the importance to each individual child. The part that home backgrounds play in the educative process is not ignored nor discounted, but as Hopkins *et al* (1994:44) notes: '*Schools can contribute differentially to pupil achievement. The school a child goes to does matter*'. St John's like many other schools is keen to perform well for the benefit of its pupils, but it is also mindful of the comparisons in performance made at local and national level on its performance overall. It is within this framework that the raising of achievement is located.

The School Improvement field seems now to be taking the more dominant position as the emphasis moves towards the activities of the teacher and the pupil in the classroom. School Effectiveness research and action continues to act as an aid to the improvement activities, and less as a separate field. The two fields have now nearly coalesced into one, and the thrust is now focussed on the teachers in the classrooms with the pupils. The effect this has on achievement both for the pupil and the teachers is then projected through the department or faculty and eventually embraces the ethos and learning environment of the school. This is then promulgated to a wider audience. While this is a simplistic statement of the ideal, in reality of course it is not as easy as that. My colleagues and I together with the pupils will always be striving but never reaching this ultimate goal. My educational theory as stated before is living and dynamic, consequently the goals are always shifting as we all learn and improve in both our actions and our achievement. Additionally, there will always be new pupils and new colleagues moving into the system who will need to embrace the culture, ethos and philosophy of the school. From the research literature, the school and the activities within it are now the centre of the change process. I propose to focus on a series of vignettes, interweaving current research literature into the reality of St John's school improvement activities. The Headteacher's mission statement is an operational guideline and an aspirational goal for staff and pupils. It sets the working frame within which improvement activities are focussed.

The School's Mission Statement - Hazlewood (1997)

A school recognised for excellence in teaching and learning, that places the learner at the centre of all endeavours and that sets the standards to which others aspire. A school at the heart of its community, where everyone is valued for who they are, for what they may become and where people matter more than anything else.

If the school is taking seriously its stated claim that it intends to raise the achievement of its pupils so that others may aspire to the same standards, then it must look very closely at its processes, and at the resource most able to effect change, the teaching staff. That is not to say that the support staff in the school are unimportant or that they do not affect what is going on in the educational process. They are very important as they help to maintain both the ethos of the school, but it is the relationship between the pupils and the teacher, and the teachers' expertise to facilitate learning of the pupils that is central to the process of improving school effectiveness. For the purposes of this discussion, the content of the curriculum has been acknowledged but then put to one side. The curriculum is tied by the strictures of the National Curriculum, and little deviation is possible from this constraint. What is still possible is to work with the performance of the teacher and the learning processes of the pupils. As alluded to earlier in the chapter, differential effectiveness occurs in every school. Not only does the cohort of pupils vary in potential ability, motivation and performance, but so does the expertise of the teacher. If achievement is to be raised for both teachers and the pupils, then a long, hard, critical and reflective look at teaching practice in the school is also necessary. It requires honesty and openness on behalf of teachers to admit that there may be other ways of approaching a teaching task, which may be more effective than the method they are employing. It also takes tact, diplomacy, and personal credibility for one teacher to suggest improvement to a colleague. Hopkins *et al* (1994:52) note:

It is now evident that the content of the lesson notwithstanding, the use of appropriate teaching strategies can dramatically increase student achievement. A major goal for school improvement therefore is to help teachers become so professionally flexible that they can select from a repertoire of possibilities the teaching approach most suited to a particular content area and their students' ages, interests and attitudes.

The ultimate goal for St John's is similar to that of Hopkins *et al* (1994:52) being that:

We find that teachers in successful schools take individual and collective responsibility for basing their teaching on the best knowledge and practice available. But they then take those ideas and strategies and critically reflect on them through practice in their own and other's classrooms.

To aid this process, my role as Professional Development Manager becomes critical. I have the responsibilities for recognising good practice in the school, and then disseminating the essence of that practice through the staff. It is more important than just disseminating information however. It is also about the process of collaboration, and learning from each other. An essential part of my role as I interpret it, is not just identifying good practice but also creating a culture where the sharing of that practice is not only accepted, but also is

greeted with enthusiasm. I aim to create a culture over time in which all staff embraces the ideal of self-improvement. Not with reservation, but with real enthusiasm and a desire for improvement. How I manage this part of my role is demonstrated in the narrative of my professional journey that runs through the thesis. My role is one of the central themes of the thesis and the reader will be able to identify the different management styles I adopt, and the different ways I record the narrative, as the thesis unfolds. This change is brought about as I learn, try out new approaches and reflect on the outcomes.

Chapter 6 –Vignette1 Alan Shelton a Teacher ‘Par Excellence’.

This chapter outlines the first of the four vignettes used in the thesis to show school improvement at work and my involvement in it. The rationale for the choice of vignettes is described here; my learning and interaction with both pupils and colleagues are evident throughout the vignette. Vignette1 is a study of a good teacher – Alan Shelton. I then look at what it means to be a good teacher from a literary perspective which gives a view forwards to what teaching might mean in the C21st. Running through this chapter are both the Socratic and Aristotelian Logics being held together as one. The concept of strands and journeys involving my learning are still the pervading focus.

The choice of vignettes, a rationale

Vignette 1 is the subject of this chapter with vignettes 2, 3 and 4 being presented in Chapter 7. I have used the vignettes that follow to reflect the different dimensions of my role as an educator, as a Professional Development Manager and facilitator as I work with teachers and pupils. Vignette 1, Alan Shelton a teacher ‘par excellence’ is the opening vignette. I have chosen this area of my research to illustrate my activities as a Professional Development Manager working with a colleague. Many contemporary educational researchers like Stoll (1999) and Hargreaves and Hopkins (1994) refer to the benefits to teacher self-esteem and professional growth and development through interactions with each other. The affirmation of good practice and the sharing of that practice is an integral part of the ‘*learning school*’ (Holly and Southworth 1989) and Rosenholtz’s (1989) ‘*moving school*’. It also enhances the concept of developing an ‘*internal capacity*’ (Stoll 1999). Additionally this vignette shows how whole school professional development can take place as a result of this sort of activity. The enhancement of Alan Shelton’s self-esteem led to the inauguration of the sort of peer mentoring activity encouraged by Hargreaves and Fullan (1999) and the concept of a ‘critical friend’ (MacBeath 2001). This vignette also illustrates the value and power of the pupil’s voice, (Thiessen 1997) and Fielding 2001).

The second vignette, the ‘Yr 11 Mentoring Initiative’ gives me an opportunity to show how I as an educator worked with pupils in an improvement process. The outcome from this process was to improve the pupils overall examination grades. Part of the process however was to allow the subject teacher through the mentor, me, to understand how to

help the pupil to perform better. To allow the teacher to, using Ainscow's (2000:4) terms, ***'personalise the learning rather than individualising the lessons'***. Additionally it again highlights my role as facilitator and Professional Development Manager. As a senior manager, I was able to ensure that all the mentors and pupils involved in the initiative had access to time, resources and the benefit of my research experience to enhance their work. Additionally, I was able to take an overview of progress across the initiative, feed positive improvements into the process and share good practice as it developed.

The third vignette was chosen to illustrate my role as a researcher working with colleagues in a school improvement process, the 'Yr 10 mentoring initiative'. This is the one occasion in my research for the thesis where I research 'on' an initiative rather than 'with' my colleagues. To this end, I was working as a facilitator 'behind the scenes'. Using the process of intersubjective criticism has allowed me to enhance the objectivity of the data from the research, and ensured that any subjectivity I brought to the initiative was appropriately validated.

The final vignette was an investigation into how as a school, we could use the knowledge of a pupil's self-esteem as a tool to aid improvement in relation to their academic performance, but also with a view to pastoral care. This base line data is then used academically to determine setting and grouping arrangements, and pastorally during individual counselling sessions with the pupil. Shan (1999) has shown that a school culture of caring enhances performance, and high achieving schools have a balance of academic emphasis and pupil care. One of the spin offs from this process is the reduction in anti social behaviours. Noddings (1995) talks about an *'ethic of care'*, and the value to the pupil it brings. The research showed that in such a climate academic performance was enhanced. These researchers argue that there is more to school and education than just academic performance.

Overall, these vignettes are examples selected to illustrate how I as an educator and Professional Development Manager have been involved in a whole school improvement process. I remind the reader that there were many initiatives taking place in the school during the time of the research, and these vignettes are used to support my claims for describing how my learning and developing living educational theory have enhanced and been an integral part of my role.

I now bring the attention of the reader to the first of my vignettes. As the teacher is the central figure in the process of teaching and learning, I made a study of a colleague acknowledged as outstanding by his peers. In my role as Professional Development Manager my hope was to analyse the features that made him outstanding and then use him as a resource for other teachers to observe and emulate if that is possible. I have used interviews with the teacher himself, Alan Shelton, other teaching colleagues and perhaps most importantly of all, used the Rudduck *et al* (1996) concept the '*voices of the pupils*'. It is important to remember that pupils are the other component in the teaching and learning process and consultation with them is an important data source. Their view and input is vital to the success of this initiative and adds great value, validity and importance to the data collected. Rosenholtz (1989) states that successful schools are places where '*both students and teachers learn*'. Little (1990) and Hargreaves, A (1991, 1992, 1993), Fullan and Hargreaves (1992) also support the concept of a sharing and collaborative approach to school improvement and see this as a powerful way of moving a school forwards. Hopkins *et al*'s (1994) work in the IQEA project also advocates collaboration and fully supports this approach. Centrally to my work, I will indicate how in my role I propose to use the work with Alan as a resource for raising the achievement and professional activities of the teaching staff.

The importance of this vignette is to show how it is possible to share a professional learning culture. The '*learning school*' concept of Holly and Southworth (1989:53) indicates that one of its characteristics is that '*teachers (and sometimes others) who constitute the staff are encouraged to collaborate by learning with and from each other*'. The study was carried out using interviews with the teacher, with the pupils he teaches and the colleagues with whom he works. The benefit from this study is explained at the end where it is clear that some knowledge of Alan's work could and should be made accessible and wider known to the staff. My role here is crucial in firstly the engagement with the process of the research, and then the professional use and dissemination of the information I gain. Holly and Southworth (1989: 53) make the teacher the pivotal part of the educative process. They say:

Staff need to be constantly thinking about how the individuals in their classes are learning and developing, and how their teaching is, or is not, enabling the pupils to learn. In essence the teacher needs to learn from the learner how to teach and to teach the learner how to learn.

If it is accepted that the teacher is central to the process of learning, it would seem to me to be important to analyse 'what makes an effective teacher?' What does that mean in real terms and even more importantly, what makes a good teacher good? My research with the

staff and the pupils in the school followed the line of questioning, whereby I asked a number of pupils and staff who they regarded as a good teacher. Sonia Nieto (1994: 395) has this to say:

One way to begin the process of changing school policies is to listen to students' views about them; however, research that focuses on student voices is relatively recent and scarce.

The power and value of the pupils' voice is also recognised by Soo Hoo (1993), Rudduck *et al* (1996), Schostak and Logan (1984), Thiessen (1997) and Fielding (2001) and will be referred to again as a powerful tool and an important ingredient in any school improvement recipe.

What makes a good teacher good is a very open term that can be interpreted in numerous ways, but the question led me to Alan Shelton. Alan is recognised as outstanding by teachers and pupils, not only for his examination results and his subject knowledge, but also because as a person he makes an impact with everyone. Alan is referred to in the text occasionally as ANS.

Alan was at the time of this vignette (1997) the Head of the Sixth Form and a member of the Mathematics Department with a teaching range across the ability band of the Upper School, but little contact with Lower School pupils. In January 1998, Alan's excellence as both a teacher and manager were recognised by the Headteacher who promoted him to the role of Assistant Headteacher and Curriculum Co-ordinator for the School. His teaching load was then reduced, but he maintained a 60% teaching timetable, and his new responsibilities put him into more contact with colleagues than ever before.

In this vignette, I have worked with Alan to try and extract the essence of his success. The real challenge has been to try and articulate in a way that is understandable to others the characteristics of the man, his consummate skills as a teacher and the very close, dynamic and warm relationship that he develops with his pupils. I have to caution here as one of the criticisms that is occasionally attributed to school improvement activities, is that of what Reynolds (1995:143) refers to as '*folk-lore*'. While the scenario is part of a:

'bottom up' approach to school improvement, in which the improvement attempts were to be owned by those at the school level, although outside school consultants or experts could put their knowledge forward for possible utilisation. This approach tended to celebrate the folklore or practical knowledge base of researchers, and focussed on changes to the educational process rather than to school management.

What I have tried to do is to rigorously validate the data achieved below by triangulation.

I have chosen this as one of my vignettes because the process of working with Alan has had a four-way effect. Firstly it has enabled me to try and make sense of his world and how he developed his professionalism and the way he works with pupils to maximise their potential. Secondly, it has helped him to understand his own position in the school and further cement his relationship with his pupils. Thirdly, I have learnt from the process and can now see more clearly how I can use such an experience as a resource for teacher improvement. Lastly, it has helped other teachers to see that pupils can help them, the professionals, to make teaching techniques more appropriate to their needs.

As the Professional Development Manager it has started a process of staff development. The Directorate for Mathematics is to undertake the use of the videos made of Alan as a teaching aid. As a discussion point from where an in-depth analysis of good teaching and learning methodology can emerge. It is seen as the starting point and focus for the Directorate on an initiative to raise the standard of teaching and learning. I hope that from this small initiative, other Directorates in the school will adopt the techniques for their own analysis and development. The analysis of the process as a staff development aid is seen at the end of this vignette.

In terms of professional development, both Alan and myself have learnt from and through the experience. From the pupil perspective, I was surprised how seriously they took my conversations, and how much they appreciated the opportunity to be involved and contribute to such research. Their attitude totally vindicates the Rudduck *et al* (1996) '*What can pupils tell us*' approach. From the perspective of the Professional Development Manager, as well as the use made by the Mathematics Directorate of the videotapes, it has a greater and more general application. It is about sharing and discussing good practice with learning taking place in a collegiate atmosphere. This shared learning process has the capability to bring about shared improvement.

What makes a good teacher good?

Following up the observation on the success of Alan in the 1996 summer examinations, I started to think about what makes a 'good teacher good'. It is quite clear that standing above the performance of teachers achieved as a result of experience, a high degree of

professionalism and commitment, there are other factors which make a small number of teachers in any school outstanding. Outstanding both in terms of their pupils' performance measured by examination results and by Ipsative (relative to the individual's starting point) progress made during the time that they are in contact with that teacher. **Appendix 10** illustrates Alan's teaching group success as measured against comparable Mathematics groups. As the reader follows the interviews with individual pupils and groups, it becomes clear that Alan has given to them the confidence, the will and the self-esteem to believe in themselves and has altered their approach to Mathematics.

To research these factors seems to be problematic because they are difficult to articulate in terms of the English language. Even more difficult, is to be able to quantify the outcomes of such experiences in terms of improved performance. As there is no control group of an exactly parallel nature who are receiving the same experience. However, as mentioned previously, Ipsative performance is a measurable factor within the group. Value added factors may give an idea of where and what the group might have achieved, and interviews with colleagues and the pupils themselves will start to identify the more overt factors that may contribute to this successful progress.

The method

I have identified that Alan has the '*Just Him Factor*' that makes him different to many other colleagues on the staff. This factor emerges in the interview with pupils later in the vignette. The pupils in the school who are taught or managed by Alan are of one voice in praise for him as a teacher of Mathematics and as the Head of the 6th Form. With this in mind, the starting point for the research was to interview him to try and investigate and isolate factors that he felt contributed to this success.

Alan Shelton - the teacher

I have decided at this point to give my subjective pen portrait of Alan in order to help in the understanding of the comments that are to follow. This character and personality assessment gives some validity and reliability to the statement and observations made by him and by the pupils and other teachers interviewed.

Alan is a man of 40+ years of age who is a teacher in the Mathematics Department at the school and has a second role as Head of the 6th Form. A man of considerable teaching

experience at all levels from 'A' level to year 7 pupils. My own subjective judgement on character and personality is as follows:

He has a sense of humour and fun that permeates throughout his lessons.

He is a true professional who cares about all his pupils both academically and pastorally.

He holds high standards of expectation, work ethic and behaviour in his classes and achieves an excellent working environment.

His work is always well prepared, well resourced and supported by experience.

He enjoys an excellent working relationship with other members of his Department, the rest of the staff and the Senior Management Team.

He instils confidence in a quiet way with all of whom he comes into contact.

He is extremely even tempered, but when roused is quite prepared to express his displeasure.

His subject knowledge is excellent.

He is fair and consistent in all his dealings with staff and pupils.

The interviews

The interview with Alan took place on 24.9.96 and I had already informed him of the fact that I wanted to talk about the examination performance of the Set 2 Maths group in Year 11 1995-6. I started by asking him what he thought were the factors which made that group successful. He replied, *'They were the nicest group I have ever taught and I genuinely enjoyed being in their company'*.

The chemistry between the teacher and the group is dependent on a number of factors, and Alan went on to describe the factors that he thought were significant in the group's success.

Group factors

These factors are not listed in any order, and carry no weighting of importance, but are observations made by Alan on himself:

- The group is a very homogeneous group of middle class children with no overtly naughty or behaviourally demanding pupils.
- There was an average spread of ability, and they were good natured and friendly towards each other.
- There was no one in the group that Alan did not understand.
- They all worked hard.

- Alan was not conscious of setting more work than normal, but he did work them hard right up to the end of the course.
- The group's momentum carried them forwards (Question - How was this momentum achieved in the first place?)
- If Alan relates well to a student, he actively encourages the pupil to work hard, the end product of which is that the pupil feels that he does not want to let Alan down.
- Alan knew the career aspirations and future plans of the entire group.
- The group itself related well to each other, there were no small cliques or isolates.
- Alan was conscious of being relaxed in class (I know from observation that this is the case, although relaxed does not mean slack, lacking in focus or purpose, it just means that the lesson is guided by light touches rather than an overbearing authoritarian approach or teaching style.)
- A number of pupils in the class did not believe in their own mathematical abilities, and Alan was conscious of working hard particularly early in Year 10 to give them confidence in themselves and in encouraging them when they achieved. As a consequence, the pupils believed very early in their contact with Alan that he was to be trusted, he had the absolute credibility of his subject knowledge and that if they listened to what he said, he had the experience to guide them to success.
- Alan felt that his reputation as a teacher had gone before him through older siblings of which quite a large number in the group had. All he had to do was to prove early on that he deserved his reputation.
- Pupils wanted to know about their own progress on a regular basis. They asked for personal progress reports and were conscious at the start of Year 11 that the grade C and above was the threshold mark to further and higher education.
- Alan was conscious that he picked up the pupils who were estimated as grade D very early in Year 11 and supported and encouraged hard and early. The estimates were made as a result of performance against the criterion referencing of previous examination papers, and so were reasonably reliable indicators.
- As a conscious strategy, Alan did not enter this group for the **Higher Tier** paper in the series. While he was aware that this debarred the group from achieving the top grades of *A and A, he felt that the group would be intimidated by the higher paper's expectations and would achieve poorer performances than entering the second tier paper and achieving high performances with confidence. This was obviously a successful strategy as 18 of the group achieved the highest grade possible on that paper, **Grade B**. As a back up to this decision, any pupil achieving grade B would be eligible for entrance

onto the 'A' level Mathematics course should they wish to do so, and it would certainly be adequate preparation for any other 'A' courses offered by the school.

- Another conscious strategy was to focus on examination technique from Easter onwards, particularly by doing a great number of previous examination papers.
- As reported by parents, the pupils in the group were very supportive of each other and spent many telephone conversations discussing their mathematical problems that had been set and were clearly keen to get the correct solutions.
- Alan was conscious of always making himself available for pupils to contact him. This he did at the end of all lessons and during the lunch hour.
- Alan was conscious of making a teaching strategy early in Year 10 of isolating pupils from each other who may cause each other distractions. This added a work ethic of purpose to each lesson and the group settled quickly to the work set.
- Lack of completion of homework was an issue that Alan managed by making quite clear his expectations and standards, and after a short time in Year 10 lack of homework completion was not an issue.
- In terms of vocabulary, Alan was conscious of the words he used, and always tried to embed theoretical mathematical concepts into every day examples.

The final comment made by Alan was the rhetorical question, 'Can teachers engender group coherence?' This he thought was the main factor leading to the success of this particular group.

In summary, the main factors in my words seem to be:

1. A caring and professional well motivated teacher.
2. A homogenous group with a well defined work ethic.
3. A teacher who is approachable and available.
4. Plenty of time spent at a 1:1 level.
5. An overt level of motivation and progress reporting.
6. Lessons which are purposeful but enjoyable with humour evident.
7. Appropriate but challenging work across the ability range of the group.

Some of these personal qualities of Alan correlate closely with the qualities identified by Reynolds *et al* (1996) in **Appendix 1** i.e. shared vision and goals, consistency of practice, an appropriate learning environment, high quality teaching and learning with an academic emphasis, high expectations, positive reinforcement and purposeful teaching.

**An interview with Annie Martin and Shane Morton Year 11 Set 2 Maths 1995 - 6
24.9.96**

These two girls were members of the teaching group. They were not selected in any way, but were happy to give of their opinion. It was made clear to the girls that Alan had given permission for them to be interviewed about him and they were aware of the possible use of the data. Again, as in the previous interview, the question was 'What factors led to the success of the group?'

The factors as the girls saw them which contributed to success

'He gave us lots of confidence'.

'As a group we were all in the same band from Year 7 so we knew each other well'.

'We were in the same ability group for Science'.

When doing homework, Alan exerted pressure by subtle means to encourage the group to perform. Annie felt under pressure to perform; ***'This was not a bad thing as it helped me to get on to task'.***

Both girls were pleased with the amount of attention Alan gave to all individuals.

They were pleased with the quick marking turn round of homework. This kept them all in touch with their progress.

They felt that Alan was taking a personal interest in them.

He was always easy to find and accessible.

He was happy to give up his lunchtime to help them and even gave them his personal telephone number.

He related the maths to everyday life and used real examples.

He ***'did not make you feel stupid if you didn't know'.***

He worked 1:1 at some point during the lessons so there were always opportunities to ask individual questions without letting the rest of the group be aware of your weaknesses.

By the end of Year 11 both girls enjoyed maths and were willing to try even if they felt the task or question was beyond them.

His reputation as a teacher was important.

Pupils in the group were willing to help each other.

He had a good sense of humour.

He is fair.

Pupils do not like sarcasm, put downs and not being allowed to voice their opinions.

They want to be pushed but not over pushed. Alan gave Annie confidence in herself. When I asked them to sum up why Alan was such a success with them they said it was difficult to

describe. It was '*Just him*' that made them work hard and with the confidence to succeed. '*He's just a good bloke and we all liked and respected him. He got the best out of us*'.

Several days after the interviews had taken place, I went back to the girls to validate what I had written. In fact, no further additional points were made, but Annie in particular wanted to change some of the wording in the interview. She felt that what I had written was a criticism of Alan when in fact she totally supported his actions with her and endorsed the pressure he put onto her as a very positive and desirable action.

An interview with Nicholas Butler, Year 11 Maths Set 2 1995 – 6

Nick was a random choice of person although I did need a male to balance the gender for my sample. He readily agreed and an appointment was fixed. Again, I made clear the reason for the research and the possible outcome of the data and the same question was put to Nick. Some of the statements are direct quotes either from Nick or quotations from Nick using the words of Alan.

Nick's factors in no particular order were

He gives you confidence by praise.

He explains things clearly.

He is happy to re-explain in a different way if you did not understand, but was not happy to explain again if you were not paying attention.

He talked to you in an adult way, he didn't treat you like a child, but he made his intentions clear.

You respect him because he is a good bloke.

He doesn't shout, keeps calm and uses encouraging phrases like '*I think that's good*'.

He is fair.

When telling you off he talks sternly, but doesn't go mad. '*Don't waste my time or yours*'.

(Nick resents teachers who shout at you.)

He is friendly and jokes, but in the right places.

'I like Maths because I like Mr Shelton, I just want to do well for him'.

He is available for extra help.

Nick was easily distracted by other pupils and Alan moved him to sit on his own early in the Year 10. Nick sat on his own for the remainder of the two years and progressed well.

(Nick achieved a Grade B in the G.C.S.E examinations).

He talked 1:1 with all pupils.

He gave clear explanations followed by the 1:1, and he always had time for everyone in the group.

Nick liked the other members of the group; everyone was part of it and got on well. *'We got on well because we were all the same type of people. That is we liked a laugh but wanted to work, there were no disruptive members'.*

The interview schedule asked students to identify other equally good teachers. The school has a good reputation in the community, and received a very favourable OFSTED report stating that the quality in all areas was at least 'satisfactory' and in many cases 'good'. For the pupils to be unable to identify more than one other teacher in the school that has a staff of 90 teachers surprised me.

An interview with Mrs. Gwen Stuart (GGS) Head of Mathematics 12.9.96

The interview was to follow up the data already established above, and to add further triangulation to the question 'what makes a good teacher', and why is Alan so special? I did agree to discuss the findings from the other interviews with her once she had given me her impressions. Following the interview, when we discussed the statements from the pupils' interviews, Gwen agreed with the points that were made, and in fact this conversation then provoked her into making one or two additional comments. Her view of the factors were as follows:

His subject knowledge is excellent - very much past the level that he is teaching at. As a result, he can always come up with the right answer. He is therefore very confident and never defensive in his lessons.

He is always willing to hear pupil's questions because he knows the answers to them and can put the answer in a variety of ways until the pupil understands.

He is incredibly positive in terms of reinforcement, he never puts pupils down.

He is loath to put anything in a negative way but he will always let the pupil know if he is unhappy with them.

He uses lots of praise and encouragement.

Pupils feel that he will never give up on them.

He pushes but not over pushes.

He has a high expectation of them in terms of behaviour, work ethic, homework and class work.

His criticism when it is given is quiet but definite. He will not tolerate poor standards of behaviour or work.

The pupils like him.

They respect him as a person to whom they can relate. They see him as a 'human being' with real every day interests like them e.g. sport, he is not just a 'Maths freak'.

They recognise that he has a genuine interest in them as people, rather than tools for the furtherance of his own career. The pupils matter to him. He is always accessible. He spends all his time in the Upper School and the pupils know where to look for him. They do seek him out for help. (This availability for help and support is part of a whole department ethic. Pupils who have problems are welcomed and helped on a regular basis at breaks and lunchtimes.)

He is very calm as a person. *'You know that you are never going to get your head bitten off'.*

Question - So what gives him the 'Just Him factor'?

Answer from Gwen – *'It is an accumulation of all the good parts from the factors listed above and not exhibiting an attitude that puts pupils off'.*

Gwen went onto explain that other members in the department (which is one of the most successful in the school as far as examination success is concerned) have some of the factors listed above, but not in total combination. The rest of the Department have some negative factors, which put pupils off, and it takes time to rebuild that relationship again. In relation to the comments on outstanding teachers made after the pupil interviews, here is a very experienced Head of Department who knows her department very well and in a very successful department in terms of examination success, unable to identify another colleague with all the same outstanding attributes.

What are the common features arising from these interviews?

The statements below occurred in all three sets of interviews

Table 1 Interview Comments

Has respect for pupils
Gives pupils confidence
Motivates
Praises and encourages
Takes a personal interest in the pupils
Always accessible
Gives individual help
Marks homework quickly
Relates work to every day examples
Good subject knowledge
Willing to listen and help
Never gives up on a pupil

High standards and expectations
Very positive in his approach
Liked by the pupils
Respected by the pupils
Genuinely interested in the pupils
Does not put pupils down or make them look stupid
Has a good reputation as a teacher going before him
Good sense of humour
He is fair
Pushes but not over pushes

Somewhere here either as a combination or as individual traits is the '*Just Him Factor*'. It is impossible to identify the factor from a list, but what is clear to me is that the factor does exist.

Alan's values explored

Following my initial interviews with Alan, Gwen and the pupils in the 1995/6 Maths group, I felt a need to rigorously embed what I have found of Alan's personal values in his teaching methodology. To this end we sat down on 22.10.96 to explore these personal values.

The approach to the interview

I had during previous interviews with Alan, the three pupils and Gwen Stuart, made copious notes in my field diary. These were to act both as a record of what was being said, but also as a means of further probing Alan's values and beliefs. I needed to do so in order to 'get under the skin' of the man and really try to establish, if I could, the relationship between him and this elusive '*Just Him Factor*'. This was a learning experience for me and for Alan, so it was very much a 'trial and see how it goes' approach. What I was sure about was that if I could get Alan to articulate his values and beliefs, then it would in some part help in the process of understanding his success as a teacher and as a person. I need to restate here that Alan is a friend as well as a colleague, and there was no hesitation on his behalf in agreeing to undertake the interview. I felt relaxed about the process and had organised my thoughts into areas of questions that I thought might help to direct his comments. As the interview progressed, the tone became much more intense and uncomfortable for both of us. Uncomfortable because the area of discussion was a very personal one and an area that, as Alan said, was not something that you have talked to someone else about. It did not prove to be a barrier and the outcome of the interview is recorded below. I, in agreement with Alan, decided to make more notes in my field diary

as the interview progressed and I recorded the questions and the responses. The questions I asked were intended to validate the subjective judgements I had already made based on earlier interviews regarding the personal qualities that drove Alan professionally. This was the next part of this particular action cycle where I was building on a general impression obtained earlier and was now probing for a deeper response.

The interview

I use the pronoun 'you' throughout the interview quite intentionally.

The opening question by me was; ***'What are your personal values and beliefs and how do they affect your teaching?'***

Answer - Alan *'Fairness and justice'*.

The first thing you mentioned was the absolute feeling of a need for fairness and justice. You recognise these feelings in yourself and you are conscious that you see other people's point of view and often take that before your own. You want the best out of every one even if ***'they have done something daft'***. (This ties in with the statement in Gwen's interview where she stated that Alan always thought the best of each pupil).

You like and hold very vigorously with the ideals of comprehensive education because it ***'was just me'***. By that he explained that he felt at home in a comprehensive school because he had attended one himself and could both identify with and understand the sort of child he was dealing with as many are just like he was at the same age. ***'I have always felt a great sympathy with all the kids I have taught because they are like me'***. (He sees the pupils he teaches as having the same fears, the same sort of social background, and the same worries over lack of ability and similar worries about performance as he did when he was at school.) Because you understand the children you state that you teach in an anticipatory way so that pupils do not misbehave.

You recognise the power of the reputation that you carry and that has built up about you as noted in a previous interview, but you are aware of lapsing into complacency and recognise the need to maintain the standard of your work with pupils to continue to justify this reputation. You also note that your professional dealings with the sixth form as the Head of Year does have an overflow down to other siblings in the younger classes in the school. At this point Alan said ***'I don't think I could use my teaching style in Savernake'***. (Researcher's note: This is the Lower School).

He enlarged on this by explaining that he worked on a teacher pupil relationship that required a degree of maturity in order for it to be successful.

You make the observation that in the Maths group under discussion, there was no one who did not conform.

Equality

Your feelings about the equality of opportunity offered by comprehensive education are again mentioned. You are genuinely concerned about those people in the school whom you recognise as being less fortunate than others. Having heard you make this statement I thought about your actions in school and I reminded you that good examples are the fact that for many years you ran an annual camp for socially and emotionally deprived children from central Birmingham. You undertake charity work in school on behalf of the LEPPA association and the theme for your assemblies on several occasions has revolved around the work of Dr Martin Luther King. You say that when you were a pupil at school, there was little help, support or expectation of performance, and little guidance for university applications. This you are determined should not happen to the pupils in your care. You personalise pupils that you recognise as needing help, as if they were you, and then get a good feeling when you help them. You are very strongly against private education because it lacks equality of opportunity for all.

Family Issues

You do not come from a strong family unit and you were delighted when you found that you were able to survive away from home at University without family support, and liked the independence that gave to you. From the point of view of your own family, *'Family, children and wife are the most important things in my life'*. You went on to say that as the children have grown up you and your wife had used the services of some 6th form students from the school as baby sitters. You now recognise that this has strengthened your relationship with pupils in the 6th form. You feel that they have seen you and been with you in an environment other than school and recognise you as a 'real' person. This ties in with the work of Clark (1996) noted later in the text.

You think your scientific background helps you to analyse problems and solve them before they happen. (This is clearly part of your teaching strategy as noted at a previous interview when you plan your lesson delivery in such a way as to iron out what you will know to be problematical for the pupils so making their learning process easier). This cold analytical

approach causes you concern in some dealings with your own family and you sometimes feel a certain lack of humanity towards family issues. *'What occupies my mind out of school is to give my own children the best opportunity I can'.*

Self-esteem

You feel it is important to build up pupils' confidence, and you do this in a calculated way not just out of the goodness of your heart because you recognise the power that it gives to the children's learning. You ask easy questions to those who find answering difficult, and you get involved quite intentionally with the disaffected so that they can make responses that give you the opportunity to praise them. You feel that by raising their self-esteem you also raise their level of performance.

Consistency and expectation

You see as important the consistency you maintain with the level of work that you set. You always set homework and you keep them working right up to the end of the course. This consistency of work is tied in with your expectations. You make it quite clear at the start of your relationship with a class that you will always expect homework from them. In the end, the pupils do not ask *'What have we got for homework?'* but say *'shall we finish this for homework?'* They expect to have homework and therefore do not see it as a chore but as an integral part of their learning process.

At the end of the interview I asked Alan if he would be happy for me to make a video of his teaching style, and he agreed. He has a similar ability group to the previous maths group discussed and so I shall target them as a source of data for the future. A few days later, I gave Alan a copy of the written script above for his comments and gave him the opportunity to add, alter or delete. Alan was happy with all that I had written and made no amendments of any kind. This was the process of validation at work.

The analysis of these interviews gives me the opportunity to reflect on the *'Just Him Factor'*. The outcome is no surprise, that is, a number of different factors, personality, humanity, strong family ties, confidence and competence as a teacher and loyalty to his pupils all combine to give Alan this factor.

My random thoughts

During my interviews with Alan and later Gwen, I was asking the question 'what makes a good teacher good?' Supporting work is seen in Clarke *et al* (1986) **Appendix 11**. Both teachers were able to tell me what they considered good professional practice, and this seems to me to be an important component of the teacher's skills. However there seems to be more. There is, that certain intangible something that is extremely hard to articulate because there seems to be a lack of appropriate language to describe this extra component.

I have undergone with Alan a process of my professional growth and development which would seem to be quite transferable to other teachers in my school. The observation and analysis using a 'critical friend' approach (MacBeath, 2001), and video recordings of other teachers in action might be helpful to them. The comments are genuine, supportive and triangulated from different pupils at different times and so can be considered legitimate and true.

It is part of my role to help colleagues to realise the approaches that they need to adopt and the positive non-verbal forms of communication that aid the learning process. This vignette has been an opening opportunity to gather data for the benefit of other colleagues on the staff. Now that this approach to learning has been developed and considered helpful, the gateway is open for its use in other schools. I have no reason to assume that the factors that engender such positive feelings with pupils are not transferable to other teaching colleagues if they adopt the role of '*the teacher as a learner*'.

The videos - A rationale

A video of Alan was made for two reasons. Firstly, I wanted to have a record of how he teaches so that I could triangulate the pupils' statements and Alan's statement about his style and methods with the reality of him in action. Secondly, I want to use the video record of him teaching to undertake some analysis of Alan to try and identify the '*Just Him Factor*'. It does not seem possible to articulate this factor, so perhaps it will become evident from video analysis. The videotape is an excellent tool for capturing facial expression and non-verbal communication of all sorts and enables an examination of body language to be made in a way that other forms of data collection do not. My feeling is that this data added to the bank of data collected from interview and general conversation will enable me to better identify the factors that make a 'good teacher' good.

I am interested in watching the relationships develop during the lesson. Superimposed on top of this is the new relationship that starts the moment the teacher and pupil make contact at the beginning of every new lesson. External factors inhibit, interfere with and detract from this relationship on some occasions for example, the weather outside, or the pupil's previous lesson. The effective teacher will have to both recognise and manage these factors if an appropriate learning environment is to be established, and an effective work ethic established for that lesson. The effective teacher will adapt style, strategy, lesson content and activities to suit the climate he or she finds himself or herself in at the start of the lesson. The learning objectives for the lesson will remain the same; it is how to get to that point that is the mark of the effective teacher.

I also wanted to celebrate with Alan, his achievements in the classroom. One of the most important processes in raising the achievement of pupils is to raise the self-esteem and effectiveness of the teachers. In addition to my colleague being able to see perhaps, for the first time, his effectiveness in the classroom, the visual data can be used in other ways.

It can be used as a teaching tool in staff development for other teachers. The Hargreaves (1999) concept of staff mentoring staff in a learning situation is the ideal I am looking towards. For many teachers it is not possible to observe colleagues at work teaching and this sort of visual resource will add to their teaching repertoire. It will give them the opportunity to reflect and learn. My aim is to raise achievement of pupils and if I can raise the achievement of staff as practitioners, then one should follow the other. Using this visual medium, it can be used to allow other teaching colleagues to rethink their teaching strategies and use the video as a teaching and learning aid.

Since the two videos have been taken, Alan's Maths Department have decided that videos of teaching and teachers in action are a good form of learning. They have made a decision to use the method as part of their departmental staff development programme. I will watch with interest and act as a facilitator as required.

The group

The group chosen as the subject for these videos with Alan is a Set 2 Yr. 10 group. In essence, a similar group in terms of ability to the previous Year 11 group that has been the subject of the analysis and comments.

The management of the videoing process

12.11.96 - I have arranged with Alan to take the first of two planned videos today. I have chosen to make 'group work' part of the video record because the management of the group and the sort of relationship that the teacher may create in such a session will probably be different to that of a didactic lesson. I have also arranged to see Alan teach this sort of lesson at a later date.

I gave all pupils the opportunity to opt out of being videoed if they wanted to. None took this course of action. I did also ask them to try and forget that the video was there and to try and act as normally as possible.

Throughout the lesson, Alan moved from pupil to pupil helping with their course work and answering queries. I focused in on any conversations that I thought would enlighten the discussion of what I am looking for and I intentionally made several shots of the clock to give the impression of the time elapsed, and the time taken with different pupils. After the first few moments, neither the pupils nor Alan seemed to be bothered by the presence of the camera. At the end of the lesson I asked for volunteers to help me to review what I had taken and 7 pupils from both sexes volunteered.

Post lesson review with 2 pupils 19.11.96

After the recording I reviewed the lesson on my video recorder at home, and offered an opportunity for Alan to have a look at the video prior to my discussion with the pupils. He does want to see it at some time, but is not worried that the pupils see it first. He commented that the videos had altered or affected his teaching style.

I undertook this review with two volunteers, Sophie and Jessica. I wanted to see if their feelings for Alan were the same as the previous Year 11 group, bearing in mind that he has only had this group for approximately 10 weeks.

I started by saying *'Tell me about Mr Shelton as a teacher'*.

Jessica

'He is the best Maths teacher I have had so far. Other teachers I have had have turned me off the idea of maths, but he makes me want to learn more'.

Sophie

'He is good, his method of teaching helps you to know what you are doing'.

I then explained that from their unsolicited responses I had made the assumption that he was a good teacher. They both agreed to this so I asked the next question.

Question What makes him a good teacher in your eyes?

Answer – Sophie

'His method of teaching. He is more modern and involves you in his teaching.

He wants you to learn.

If you don't understand, he won't get angry with you and he will try other ways until you do understand. If people get angry you are worried about asking for help and therefore don't want to learn and are put off the subject.

He is willing to give up his spare time.

His board work helps you to learn what you have been taught by giving a series of exercises.

He keeps you working all the time.

He explains issues clearly so that you understand.

He likes us to look for our own way of doing things, he doesn't just give it to us or expect us just to do it his way'.

Jessica

'I think it's brilliant.

He lets us learn and enjoy the achievement of that.

It makes you really do your homework so that you can get it right and want more.

I have done my maths homework regularly for the first time.

He never really shouts.

I have always wanted to be a teacher and he has made me consider it even more when I leave school.

His personality is important.

He is:

Friendly

Lets you have a laugh but not go too far

He cares that you learn

He encourages you

He gets you involved without knowing it.

He gets you to enjoy the subject

He explains things well

He encourages you to keep working and he gives you the satisfaction of getting it right'.

Wallace in Rudduck *et al* (1996: 30) notes that Nash (1976) has observations on some of the factors listed above:

Friendliness was immensely important to our pupils; it was seen as a characteristic of teachers who as Nash found were believed by pupils to like teaching and children. These teachers were, therefore respected and liked in return. It was this 'liking' moreover, that, in the eyes of the pupils, led teachers to take the trouble to make their teaching interesting, to explain the work in a way that could be understood and be prepared to offer unstinting help when work proved difficult to get to grips with.

**** My note** - It seems that the importance for these two girls is that they enjoy success and it then breeds more success, Alan enables this to happen.

Jessica again

He is never too busy to explain something to you; liking the teacher is important, showing a friendly interest in each individual. The good marks are not being gained for him; he wants you to get a good mark for yourself.

What is apparent is that Alan has already instilled in this new group an interest for the subject and a desire to succeed. Both of which are already being exhibited.

21.11.96 - Video review with the 7 volunteers

The aim of this session was two-fold. To let the pupils see themselves on camera and secondly for me to test my interpretation of what I saw. I asked them, looking at the video, if there were any gestures or mannerisms that they found encouraging from Alan. They produced the following list:

He talks one to one.

He talks at desk level.

He listens hard first, then explains it then says it again.

He makes good eye contact even when not crouching down.

He smiles and looks at you.

He squints his eyes and looks interested.

He leans back when you are talking and leans forwards when he talks to you.

He writes down on paper what he is saying and his explanation.

He has got time for your problem even though there are many demands.

Q. *Has he got any irritating mannerisms?*

A. *'No'*

Q. *Did the camera affect the way you behaved?*

A. *'Yes to start with but then it went away. The camera made you feel uncomfortable when it was near you'.*

Q. *Have you any other comments?*

A. *'He is very accessible and willing to help, he has high expectations - He treats you with respect and like set 1'.*

Q. *Are there other teachers like him?*

A. *Yes MXH, AXW, MPP, DPB, AJP, TYN, KXH*

These teachers were the sum of the group's responses and most pupils qualified the response in one way or another.

The next step forward is to take a video of Alan teaching a more formal lesson. The video of Alan teaching a more didactic lesson was undertaken on 3.12.96. I undertook an analysis of what was on the videos, and I informed Alan of this analysis. I asked him if he would record his feelings about what he saw on the video to cross check and triangulate with me. I will also ask the pupils to undertake the same exercise.

The analysis process

Initially I started to analyse the first video by making a grid checklist of all the features that I thought might appear on the video that may be of some significance later. Such features as smiles, who Alan talked to, for how long, the distribution of time to each gender.

Descriptive analysis

I have now decided to write a running commentary of the lessons as I see them, with my interpretations of what is happening. I intentionally numbered the events as they happened in the lesson so that easy reference to any particular event would be possible at a later date and I put pupil and ANS's dialogue in bold italic to highlight it.

After I had completed the analysis of the videos from my point of view, I returned them to Alan to see if my analysis and interpretation was the same as his. He added his comments to the script, and these are noted in Italics underneath the event as it is numbered. The full commentary of the video can be found as **Appendix 12**. Below are sample extracts to give the reader the flavour of the process, and the responses of Alan and the pupils.

The start of the lesson

1. The video starts with me giving the date and maths set to be videoed.
2. Before the start of the lesson Chris asks ANS a question about his homework.
3. ANS crosses one arm and puts one hand on his head and avoids immediate eye contact at the start of the verbal interchange, but is looking at the work being shown to him by the pupil.
4. He touches his mouth, puts his hand back to his head and starts to give his answer.
5. His body posture now becomes more open as he turns to face the pupil and there is the start of eye contact.
6. ANS makes eye contact and he smiles, as does the pupil.

I was keen to reward his questioning, but found it difficult to make useful sense of what he had written.

7. ANS then moves to Kirsty and again does not initially make eye contact but speaks to Kirsty and refers to her work by pointing at it and is clearly answering her query. He leans over her in a non-threatening way so reducing the height differential and Kirsty makes a point to him in explanation to his comments. She gives two glances in his direction, but ANS does not receive this eye contact. ANS is however listening to her response and can be heard to say '*Ah*' as her explanation becomes clear to him and he changes his body position slightly.
8. You hear ANS say '*Good stuff*' followed by a smile of encouragement to a pupil out of shot. The questioner then comes into shot and both he and his friend are smiling.
9. ANS stands up and moves off to Jessica and acknowledges a request from the other side of the room and says '*I will be with you in a moment*'.
10. He makes eye contact with Jessica while standing above her and uses his hands to elaborate the point he is making.

My analysis of Alan's video 1

Throughout this lesson, the emphasis is on personal contact with individuals. I have noticed several mannerisms about Alan, but I am not sure at this stage of the significance of them. They occur frequently throughout the lesson and are as follows:

- a. He touches his head and face a great deal with his hands.
- b. He uses his hands to elaborate many of the points he is making.
- c. He seems to lower himself down to desk level or at least close to pupil height intentionally when talking to pupils.
- d. He does not seem to make direct immediate eye contact. He seems to favour looking at the neutral space of the pupil's work and then as the dialogue develops, more firmer and positive eye contact is made.
- e. He smiles a great deal and seems friendly towards all the pupils.
- f. There is no sense of urgency or time limit about the time he spends with each individual pupil, but he wastes no time either.
- g. He visits and talks to every pupil in the class at some point in the lesson and most pupils on a number of occasions.
- h. The class seems well-motivated and able to work on their own. They are not disturbed when an outside pupil visits the room.
- i. There is evidence on a number of occasions of pupils helping each other if they find a problem.

The analysis of this tape is reasonably short as much of the lesson was that of repeated 1:1 work where the style of teaching was constant. Many of the features mentioned by the Year 10 girls were exhibited during this tape. Again, the full transcript of the tape is seen in **Appendix 12**. This tape has Alan's post lesson comment added as bold italics above as we sat and analysed his actions in a following interview. Excerpts are included in the text here to give a flavour.

Video tape 2 - 3.12.96

1. MAB is seen introducing the tape, giving details about the group, the date and the maths set.
2. The video opens with a shot of the clock, it's 11.45 and pupils are coming in from break and starting to settle down. It is the same group as in the previous video.
3. Alan appears scratches his head starts giving out books and ensuring that all pupils have all that they need for the lesson. The lesson hasn't started yet, but he is obviously doing a quick check as to the whereabouts of absentees.
4. The bell is heard to go and Alan immediately starts the lesson, he moves to the side of the room and can be heard directing pupils' thoughts back to the previous lesson. He says: *'Last lesson we did algebra and you tried to make sense of that – now it's my job to make sense of the sense that you tried to make of it'*.
5. A Comment *'Ugh nice clear start'*.
6. Alan continues *'You were getting quite good at this'*.
7. He asks a specific question to Chris and an open question to the group, and when he gets the response he wants he says *'excellent'*.
8. He asks a specific question to Simon and he organises how he wants the response by asking pupils to put their hands up if they know the answer.
9. There is a deluge of hands and the correct answer is given to which he responds *'brilliant'* and *'excellent'*.
10. After working through more examples on the board, he says *'Take a break and put your pens down and look this way'*. They all do so and he launches into a quiz question with them *'I am thinking about two numbers which when multiplied together equal 0, what can you tell me about these numbers? - Don't shout out, put your hands up. Tell me something about this number, no matter how trivial'*.
11. Alan moves around the class again talking to individuals about their work.

My analysis of this lesson

The lesson was planned and carried out as a formal didactic lesson. Alan had a clear set of learning objectives, which he wished to achieve during the lesson, and conducted the lesson in such a way that he was bound to achieve those objectives. His style is relaxed but formal and he enjoys an excellent relationship with his pupils, this gives me the impression of a craftsman at work. The statements of the Year 10 pupils I interviewed, and which are also reflected by previous pupil interviews support this. Rubin (1985: 59) sums up the concept of teaching as artistry:

There is a striking quality to fine classrooms. Students are caught up in learning; excitement abounds; and playfulness and seriousness blend easily together because the purposes are clear, the goals sensible and an unmistakable feeling of well-being prevails. Artist teachers achieve these qualities by knowing both their subject matter and their students; by guiding the learning with deft control - a control that itself is born of perception, intuition and creative impulse.

All of the stated characteristics of Alan from the Year 11 pupils, the Year 10 pupils and his own analysis of his actions come through in this video.

These personal characteristics

- he smiles a lot and wrinkles his face while doing so - a feature that Jessica obviously felt was a non-verbal friendly gesture;
- he makes time for all the pupils in the group and works extremely hard during the lesson to make constant contact with them;
- he keeps the pressure on during the lesson that goes at a brisk pace;
- he is confident in what he is doing and relaxed and friendly in the lesson;
- not once does he look annoyed or use put downs to keep control, but does use gentle personal reminders to let individuals know that he wants their attention and that they should stop whatever it is they are doing;
- he uses the strength and knowledge of the class to help answer their queries, and leaves the opportunity for solutions for them to work out;
- he has an excellent working relationship with the group and they are aware of what he wants and how he works;
- he asks open-ended questions and encourages answers in an environment where the wrong answer is a response to be worked on rather than one to be laughed at;
- humour and enjoyment flow throughout the lesson but it is controlled and the group knows when to stop;

- he uses material and responses from the group all the time and fully involves them in the working of examples;
- he sets homework and does not compromise on that even though there was an excuse on this occasion for the pupils not to be able to do it;
- as he works through examples on the board, he goes from the known to the unknown in easy stages giving confidence to the pupils on the way;
- there are always words of encouragement throughout the lesson, '*brilliant, well done, excellent, good*' are evident all the time. Never ever is there heard any sort of negative comment;
- standards and expectation of behaviour, written presentation, oral responses and mental agility are high;
- noise levels are low and pupils are on task for the great majority of the lesson and seem happy to be so;
- classroom discipline is firm and friendly;
- Alan has time for everyone in the class and gives the appearance of being able to monitor all the pupils' work as he passes by. He makes good eye contact and leans down when talking to pupils;
- Alan is very mobile in the classroom, moving towards and away from the board, visiting all parts of the room to talk to pupils and to look at the work as it is being produced. This is bound to keep the pupils on their toes in case he stops by them to see how they are doing. Is this a conscious strategy, or does it happen naturally? *Alan's response -Yes it was, and now it is second nature.*

The lesson was controlled with good humour with clear learning objectives set and achieved in an atmosphere of industry and interested participation. Wallace (1996: 38) notes:

Teachers could come with very different approaches to their subject, but these are less important than the interactive relationships they establish with pupils. The most successful teachers had strategies which melded their management of pupils to the content and style of the subject. Some were able to shift the mood of the class from humour to seriousness in ways which, as reported, suggested nothing less than mutually respectful relationships.

In addition, Alan did just what Brown and McIntyre (1993) note as being of good practice; he arrived at the lesson with clear goals and activities to help the pupils move forwards in their learning. He used his professional judgement and knowledge about the pupils to make full use of the curriculum contents to help with this learning process and he selected from a

range of appropriate strategies to accomplish the lesson delivery as the 'experienced and professional teacher' does. The class also make judgements as they come into the classroom and their actions on the video are supported by the findings of Wallace (1996:38) who says:

Pupils too come to classrooms with an agenda for action, make rapid initial judgements and select from a repertoire of possible behaviours.

It is clear from the reference made above, that the teacher and the class are in close harmony and achieving purposeful teaching and learning. I am sure, that in agreement with Gardner (1993), the basis of this success in Alan's case is the foundation of sound interpersonal relationships. A teacher who is prepared to listen is an understanding teacher. The concept of teacher artistry should be included in the 'bounty box' of Alan's skills. His ability to 'create' in the classroom puts him above many other teachers. Hopkins *et al* (1994:59) note: ***'The artistry of a very successful teacher involves this ability to engage with, and turn to advantage, events and responses that could not have been anticipated'***. Teacher artistry goes further than this however. It is the recognition that teaching is a creative activity which is carried out in a highly personalised way. To this end, Alan has a very specific approach to his teaching style, but an examination of the interviews shows that it is a very considered style. Alan has calculated the requirements of the class and the individual in the class and creates an environment where optimum learning occurs as a result of this knowledge. A further quote from Hopkins *et al* (1994:59) shows the relevance of this artistry to the wider school audience.

It is now evident that the content of lessons notwithstanding, then the use of appropriate teaching strategies can dramatically increase student achievement. A major goal for school improvement therefore is to help teachers become professionally flexible that they can select from a repertoire of possibilities the teaching approach most suited to a particular content area and their students ages interests and attitudes.

Finally on artistry, Gray (1990) has used this concept as one of his indicators for effective schools. That is, he has measured the proportion of pupils who have a 'good or vital relationship' and comments that this good or vital relationship with the teacher is a fundamentally important part of the teaching process. Alan has this 'good' relationship in huge quantities and it needs to be made clear and encouraged amongst the rest of us just how important this sort of relationship is with pupils.

A review of learning a year later

So how does this help with the school's mission to raise achievement. To answer this fully, I felt that one more set of interviews was needed. One year on, in February 1998, I decided to re-interview both Alan and the two girls Annie and Shane to see if there were any new dimensions that had appeared in retrospect, and for me to further engage with Alan on his thoughts and actions post the initial research. I decided to probe the professional part of the conversation as my role as Professional Development Manager requires action to be taken if I consider it as a useful tool. I indicated earlier in the chapter that there should be valuable staff development material embedded within vignette. I have recorded both the questions and the answers verbatim, and prior to the questions I reminded Alan about the project I was engaged in and what benefit the school could accrue from the information.

Key: Q = Question from me, A = Answer from Alan

Q Has anything changed in your practice as a result of the work and interview I carried out with you last year?

A *The thing that I am conscious of changing the most is the confidence in what I am doing because even though I, as a process of self evaluation, felt satisfaction over the reaction with the kids and the exam results, you get some feeling as to whether you are doing the job properly or not. I have never had an external validation of the quality of what I am doing and I think that that was the biggest impact of last years work on me. I now have the confidence to go and offer advice to other people knowing that I know what I am doing.*

Q Did you get this strength from the staff or the pupils. What is it that gave you this confidence?

A. *We sit in a glass bubble, lock the door when the class is in and cut ourselves off from others. We work independently and don't share as much as we should and a lot of that is a confidence thing. There could still be things I would not be totally confident in sharing with everybody because I am not sure that, that is the legitimate way of doing something. People rarely see the things that came through that work, and that was tremendously supportive, helpful and confidence giving and made me feel that I was in a position to go and offer people help in the teaching sense and open my door wider and let people in to watch me do what I do.*

Q How could we spread this word wider?

A *It is a fact that you are accepted in that position as someone who can 'deliver' by colleagues and the kids themselves. There are others on the staff in the school who would be seen by the staff as being a good teacher but not seen by the kids in the same light, and vice versa. In order to get someone to be in a position to help others, you have to have both things. If they get a comment that says 'If you have talked to Mr Shelton then that's fine,' type of response then it's implied that*

it's OK and that feeds back to other staff. We have to generate that feeling of confidence in other staff.

Alan felt that there were at least five other staff who he considered to be in the same category as himself. Alan went on to confirm again that he felt the value of siblings passing down information to younger brothers or sisters was a powerful ally to have. This is confirmed when I speak to Annie Martin later.

Q How could we use you as a model in staff development?

A Alan's response to this indicated a difficulty. In the time span between the two interviews, he had been promoted to Assistant Headteacher and he felt that this role could well be interfering with the data. Some parallels with the work of Bennett and Harris (1999) on the power base in schools can be made here. Alan goes on to say:

'that if it was possible to get staff in the school to accept that there are teachers who have got useful advice to offer, and that this advice is accepted when it is offered then that would be a step forward. In addition if it were possible to train and cascade those sorts of teachers down the school then we would be moving forwards. Eventually it will stop, but you will have more people feeling the same emotional high that I felt, and the recognition from other colleagues that what you do is OK. That ought to be something that we are doing anyway and that's what we wanted to feel when we came into the job. It's that validation 'that it is a really difficult job working with people'.

I pointed out to Alan that if I had found that the staff and the pupils had got little to say about him he might have felt differently. He responded that he did not feel that this would have phased him although he would have been disappointed. ***'It does give you that feeling that you have got scope to talk to other colleagues about what they are doing'***. Alan now feels that he can talk to other staff about their performance because they recognise him and value his opinion. It has empowered him.

Dewey (1929: 55) in talking about outstanding teachers states:

The successes of such individuals tend to be born and die with them: beneficial consequences extend only to those pupils who have personal contact with such gifted teachers. The only way by which we can prevent such waste in the future is by methods which enable us to make an analysis of what the gifted teacher does intuitively so that something accruing from his work can be communicated to others.

This is research from the past with words of wisdom applicable for the present. It must be my job to see that this dissemination of information and talent is undertaken.

This dissemination has to be undertaken sensitively however as Hopkins *et al* (1994) reminds us that the idea of theoretical '*models of teaching*' do not appeal to everyone. He suggests that rather than using the model teacher as a pinnacle to aspire to, the suggestion should be that these approaches are a possible model to follow in a less prescriptive manner. In that way, the professionalism of the individual teacher is observed, but the seeds are sown.

Alan also feels that if he acknowledges that he finds some lessons difficult then this is also helpful to others in raising their feelings as they recognise him as being a 'good teacher'. This is a '*mea culpa*' strategy that many of us use to effect, but in Alan's case it is actually coming from the heart. Alan went on to reflect as he did in the previous interview about his earlier days in teaching and at school for himself when he felt that some teachers could have had a more enjoyable time if the support had been there. ***'At the start of my career I would have loved someone there to support me in a non-threatening way. It's opening up a culture of talking within the institution about classroom management'***. For some teachers classroom management is a real issue and they need support with it. Wallace (1996:113):

Common sense expectations of schooling suggest that quiet attention is the only condition under which full classroom instruction can take place and pupils need to 'settle down' if they are to 'get on with their work'. Teachers who cannot establish order seem ineffective. Pupils recognise and comment freely on such situations. Lacking any means of communication effectively with pupils under such conditions, teachers who cannot 'organise it' are lost.

OFSTED (1993) also note that '*Good behaviour is a necessary condition for effective teaching and learning to take place*'. If Alan feels that he can play some part in this supportive process, then I must support him, and the significant raising of his confidence and self-esteem has been a major contributing factor in this process.

Q Was the video helpful?

A ***I am keen to use the video in the Maths department as a training tool and it may be useful to others. Newly Qualified Teachers, Trainee Teachers and other staff who need support.***

Q How have I helped you go forwards?

A ***I recognise the value of picking up on what the pupils have identified as being good and doing more of this in class. In addition, the talking to pupils in my classes outside of the classroom is so important and I am doing more of that now. It is the sort of thing I do naturally because once I have taken them on they become my pupils, and I smile and nod in a way that I do not do with other pupils in the school. They also greet me with a 'hello sir' and after a time their friends whom I do not teach start to do the same thing. I do it because I am interested in***

them, but I do have at the back of my mind that it helps with classroom management.

Q How did you feel about the conversations we had?

A *OK, I wondered how we would have them and whether we would get to the real issues, but I feel really happy about the process and I found myself thinking about areas that I had never thought of before. I was surprised that we managed to get in so deeply so quickly. The self-analysis and a chance to talk about issues in a comfortable way and a validation of what I already thought made it easier. The concept of talking in depth about the job seems very helpful.*

This conversation allowed me an insight into Alan's world a year on and has given very clear pointers to how I can further the raising of achievement through teacher development. I think that we have both learnt from the process. Alan has developed a reassured sincerity in the way he helps and works with other colleagues. I have learnt a new technique for teacher development wearing my Professional Development Manager hat. In addition, I have developed a deeper appreciation of how an individual's beliefs and values guide their every day actions. This is a crucial area of knowledge for the development of my own living educational theory.

A pupil reprise

Three of the four pupils previously interviewed were re-interviewed. They were asked the question 'What can you do now that you could not do before Mr Shelton taught you?' The overriding answer to this question was confidence in tackling a problem. While there were other specific answers about being able to do Algebra better or some aspect of statistics, the overriding aspect was that he had changed their way of thinking for themselves. As Cordelia said;

'He brings out the fact that the pupils have the confidence to know that the answer is in themselves somewhere'.

Ollie - 'He has altered my way of thinking'.

Matthew - 'He always makes you feel you are learning for yourself'.

I asked the group how he achieved this and they again listed a series of personality traits that they found particularly helpful. He is bold, comfortable with his subject material, honest with the pupils, gives everyone attention at some time during the lesson, never puts you down, always available, accessible, patient, respects the pupils, constantly repeats difficult areas in different ways until the topic is understood. In addition to this list, they commented on his teaching style.

'There is no tension in the classroom, he doesn't need to use discipline, we all respect him, he moves around the classroom a lot, he uses his hands expressively,

he makes the class friendly towards each other so that they help each other. He scans the room constantly with his eyes and keeps everyone on task'.

I was surprised at the depth of this analysis and the richness of their comments. I have learnt another lesson here in the value of using pupils as a source of data. I have resolved to ask for pupil opinion in the future but I am aware of the complexity of this process as explored by Thiessen (1997) and Fielding (2001). It has given me some fuel for thought in terms of staff development. This is an important part of my learning and a stage in the action cycle for me.

I questioned the group about the '*Just Him Factor*'. They came to the conclusion that it was his personality combined with an outstanding teaching style and methodology combined with excellent subject knowledge. Added to this was the fact that because he was a family man, the group felt he had an empathy with younger pupils during their struggle to learn. He identified with them as he does with his own children and has a desire to do the best for them. To summarise the feeling of the group about Alan and his lessons, I think it's useful to state the findings of Doyle (1987:95) about the structure of lessons when he points out that students usually learn more when a teacher:

Emphasises academic goals, makes them explicit, and expects students to be able to master the curriculum;
Carefully organises and sequences curriculum experiences;
Clearly explains and illustrates what students are to learn;
Provides students with ample opportunity to practise, gives prompts and feedback to ensure success, corrects mistakes, and allows students to use a skill until it is over-learned or automatic.
Reviews regularly and holds students accountable for work.

Coming out of these interviews and from the videotape, clear examples of these features abound.

Annie Martin 28.2.98

I repeated my questions to Annie, the most important one being 'What can you do now that you could not do before contact with Alan Shelton?' I did also make the point before she answered, that we both understood that she is bound to have changed in both her outlook and life management since the original interview as it was two years ago. Her answer was in line with those of the younger pupils. ***'He made me realise that I could do it if I tried hard enough. He gave me the confidence to realise that I can do things even if I doubt them myself'.***

Q How did he do that?

A *By getting me to go back to basics if I ever have a problem. He has given me a style of learning which overflows into all aspects of my current lifestyle. He has also given to me the confidence to ask for help in all sorts of different parts of my life. Because he never put me down when I asked him for help, I now have the confidence to ask others.*

Q Had you heard about him before you went into his class?

A *Yes, other pupils said great when I told them that I was to be in his maths class, and neighbours and friends with older children also told me how good he was. I have never had reason to disagree with that in the last four years.*

Q What is it that makes him so special? (At this point Annie paused and giggled, and we had a renewed conversation about the 'Just Him Factor'.) After some consideration all she could say was '*it's just him*'. She did then go on to say with the maturity of two more years than when the question was asked before '*I think it's a combination of his personality and his ability to teach*'.

She went on to say that she knows a number of good teachers, but no one else with this added extra quality. My final question was to ask her if she still held him in the esteem that she did two years ago. Her answer:

Even more positively now than before. Even though he has not taught me for two years, my dealings with him as a member of the 6th form has confirmed what a good bloke he is.

My learning from this Vignette

An analysis of this small-scale study by both reflection and conversation is of great importance to Alan and myself both personally and professionally. It allows both of us to understand the processes at work in the complex world of teaching where relationships and personality play a central role in the pupil learning process. In addition, the professional development of Alan and the assistance it has given to me in my managerial role could only have occurred as a result of this in-depth vignette.

What have I learnt from this vignette? Firstly it has come as a surprise to me that a colleague would allow himself to be probed, cross-examined and exposed with such willingness. I have been delighted with Alan's response and his willingness to give so much of his precious time on what at the outset he must have felt was of little value to him. Personally what I have also learnt is the great respect I have for Alan as a person and as a colleague. His integrity, honesty and sheer professionalism comes through time and again, as does his love of teaching and his care for those in his classes. On a personal note, I have further confirmed that this teacher is very special to the school and it is essential that some of him is 'bottled' and sprinkled onto others. Other things that I learnt are the sensitivity

and tact required delving into the personal lives and feelings of colleagues. Several times I have felt uncomfortable and at the same time privileged to be party to the information given. There is opportunity for future professional development for other staff using these techniques, but I know that I will have to choose my colleagues carefully. I am sure that not all my colleagues would be prepared to be as open and honest as Alan has been. I have also learnt that pupils as Rudduck *et al* (1996) keep reminding us are an excellent source of rich data that must be tapped. Their honesty, willingness and interest in being involved has also surprised and delighted me and again I am anxious to represent them in as honest a way as possible and so I have reported them verbatim as often as possible so that their real strength of feelings can emerge through their words. I have learnt that videos are an excellent form of recording data, as long as it is triangulated with all the participants. Those non-verbal clues would be missing from tape recordings of voices, and as the pupils in the interviews said, it is often the non-verbal actions of the teachers that means so much to the pupils. Joyce and Showers (1991 and 1992) have clearly demonstrated in their work the importance of effective teaching strategies in the classroom and I was privileged to watch such practice in operation.

As the Professional Development Manager there are a number of issues now to be developed. Firstly, there is the concept of developing a staff where mutual support and observations are both accepted and welcomed and a way of sharing good practice. A degree of sensitivity however is required here. Not all teachers will welcome the idea of an 'Alan Shelton' being pushed at them. I have as part of my management strategy to recognise when such a situation could be counterproductive. In such a scenario, I will have to use other strategies to cascade the same message packaged in a different way.

Secondly, there is the concept of imbuing self-esteem and self-confidence in staff so that the 'feel good' factor returns to their teaching. Creating an internal motivating force that takes all staff along with the school's mission statement to raise the potential and achievement of all pupils in the school. To make the school '*a beacon of excellence*' where teachers and pupils are working to their full potential in a harmonic positive culture of endeavour.

Thirdly, understanding the value of video recordings as a strategy for staff development. Newly qualified teachers, teachers who need support and members of Directorates can all benefit for seeing colleagues in operation.

Fourthly, in engendering a culture of the open classroom where teachers are happy to be observed and discussing the teaching methodologies involved using the '*critical friend*' concept (MacBeath and Mortimore, 2001).

Fifthly, the concept of giving teachers time and opportunity in a structured but personal forum where they can discuss at length and in depth their teaching, their strengths, aspirations and worries. The real challenge for me is to put these ideas into operation in such a way as to convince my colleagues of their value. I will return to this later.

The sixth issue was the use of pupil voices. I hope that by using pupil voices during this research activity both in analysis and as a revelation of the values they hold as important, other teaching colleagues will both see and understand the validity of using such an approach. The work of Thiessen (1997) Southworth (1999) and Fielding (2000) act as validation to the power of this source. What appears superficially to be threatening is in fact a very powerful and at times a salutary way of learning. The use of pupils here and in other initiatives recorded in Chapter 7 confirms for me the strength of pupil involvement.

The sum of this learning for me is both personal and professional. On a personal basis my learning has taken my ability to understand and develop my living educational theory forwards. I can now see more clearly how my values, standards and beliefs and those of colleagues like Alan, form part of the relationship developing process. On a professional basis, I appreciate even more the importance of a collaborative and collegiate community. A community where the structures are in place that allow for and encourage the reflective practitioner, a place where the Hargreaves (1993) notion of a '*collaborative culture*' can dominate as the norm. This work has given me a direction for developing structures that will allow this culture to flourish. Hargreaves (1993:28).

It is not possible to establish productive school cultures without prior changes being effected in school structures that increase the opportunities for meaningful working relationships and collegial support between teachers. The importance of the structural option of re-structuring, therefore, may be less in terms of its direct impact on the curriculum, assessment, ability grouping and the like, than in terms of how it creates improved opportunities for teachers to work together on a continuing basis.

I would hope that some of the barriers to be broken down in support of this re-structuring have already occurred, but the research data from this vignette will add momentum and

direction for the remaining barriers to be overcome. The series of diagrams in chapter 9 describe the changes in detail.

The enigma of the '*Just Him Factor*' remains for me. I still cannot articulate exactly what it is. This is not to say that I have failed in my quest however, but like other areas of research there is not at the present time an adequate form of language to express the concept. On a personal note the inability to be able to articulate this factor has been a surprise to me and in itself is a part of a learning cycle. I have been able to recognise that lists of factors that make an effective teacher do not necessarily bring out the 'artistry' of the individual. I think it is probably the mix of factors that create the phenomenon.

Alan's learning

What has Alan got from this study? Perhaps most importantly of all, a boost in confidence and self-esteem. While he was always confident and positive in his approach to teaching, colleagues and pupils in this vignette have validated that for him. It has allowed him to reflect on aspects of his life and teaching that he has never considered and certainly not articulated before and it has allowed him to see how others see him. Not only has it allowed Alan to hear what people say about him and his practice, but also it has altered his approach to teaching. Now that he is aware of what pupils value, he does more of those actions with them which in turn further cements his already strong relationship. It has also enabled him to have the confidence to engage in conversation and support with colleagues on their teaching expertise and strategies and to offer help with the confident knowledge that it will be accepted and used because colleagues recognise him as a good practitioner.

Pupil learning

What has this research done for the pupils? It has given to them the opportunity to think about their work with a very special teacher. It has given them the self-confidence to solve their own problems, to ask for help when unsure, and a style of living and learning which spills over into all other areas of their lives. In most cases it has raised their academic potential to give them higher grades than they were originally predicted. The 1998 cohort of examination results are displayed in **Appendix 13**. Again one cannot attribute completely the improvement to one person, all that can be offered is a suggestion that Alan has significantly contributed to the process of raising achievement for the pupils with whom he came into contact.

Teacher learning

If we recognise that the teacher is central to the whole thrust of School Improvement and School Effectiveness, it is important to recognise the tasks and the person. I now take a general look at the task of teaching children in the C21st. It is a different profession to that which I entered in 1967, and it is important that we as teachers recognise that change is taking place, and change with it. As the Professional Development Manager, I have the task of helping my colleagues and myself in the re-orientation process for the new millennium. Hargreaves and Fullan (1999) support the concept of '*mentoring*' as one way forward. A similar concept to that of '*peer coaching*' (Joyce *et al*, 1999) is recognised as a positive professional development initiative. That is having the use and benefit of '*advice, support and role-modelling of wiser, more senior colleagues*'. This requires willingness for open and frank dialogue, the acceptance of the view of others and that we should share our strengths to support our weaknesses. If a culture can be developed where older or more experienced teachers can share that expertise with others then this is a positive additional strategy for us all. The type of vignette just described is the start of such a process. Indeed the openness of the classrooms to colleagues has now been established, as has peer mentoring and supportive lesson observation.

This then draws to a close this chapter. I have used the school improvement and school effectiveness data in an original way. I have combined qualitative and quantitative data together in the appendix to show how through the frame of a vignette, an improvement process might work. I have confirmed, using the research literature and the work with Alan Shelton, that learning for pupils and teachers is possible and likely given the appropriate school culture and ethos. In addition I have shown how my own learning has developed aiding me both in my role as the Professional Development Manager, and personally.

Having set the scene with the requirement and attributes of a good teacher firmly in the mind, Chapter 7 will explore other vignettes of improvement I have been involved in.

Chapter 7 - Some More Vignettes

This chapter sets out in detail three more of the many improvement initiatives being undertaken during the research period, by the school. These three initiatives are chosen as representative of the 25 listed in the index of initiatives found in Chapter 4. The narrative is found as a mixture of diary notes, memos and prose explanation. What I am trying to present here is that the two Logics, the dialectic and the propositional are being held together in a single journey of school development. My involvement, learning and the various journeys made by myself particularly in my role as Professional Development Manager and the improvement journey of the school are running simultaneously. The series of Action Research Cycles can also be identified. Some of these cycles show completion during this chapter; others are explored later in the thesis. Others continue to turn.

The place of The St John's initiatives

Having examined Vignette 1 in Chapter 6 to indicate the relationship between the good teacher and the raising of achievement, I now propose to look from the context of the merged School Effectiveness and School Improvement fields at initiatives undertaken by the school. While I can recognise that the initiatives undertaken by the school are all 'home grown' I do feel it necessary to embed them within the national framework of current research. The most significant project of recent years which relates most closely to the work at St John's has been the IQEA Project. This project stems from the original concept of Barth's (1990) that if improvement is to take place it has to come from within the school itself. In his book *'Improving School From Within'* there is a recognition that the school has to be the centre of change if that change is to be effective and sustained. The philosophical approach of the work being undertaken at St John's is similar to that of the Hopkins *et al* (1994: 7) work with the IQEA project.

IQEA works from the assumption that schools are most likely to strengthen their ability to provide enhanced outcomes for all pupils when they adopt ways of working that are consistent with their own aspirations as well as the current reform agenda.

The outcome noted from this research is that school improvement is most effective when there is a clear focus of what development is required, and this is linked to simultaneous

work on the internal conditions in the school. The IQEA project (Hopkins *et al*, 1994:7) project recommends that these conditions include:

Reconstructing externally imposed educational change in the form of school priorities;
Creating school conditions that will sustain and manage change in schools;
Embedding these priorities and conditions within an overall strategy.

To clarify these words and put them into the context of St John's, the restructuring is referring to the opportunity the school is taking to support the work of teachers, linking classroom practice to whole school development. For instance, the thrust for the school in 1998 was of creating a more effective teaching and learning environment. This was detailed in the Directorate and School Development Plans and was central to the three year Strategic Plan for the school. Remembering my role in this process, whole school supportive conditions are referring to the provision of appropriate staff development opportunities for all staff, providing opportunities for reflection and inquiry and this development is tied into effective leadership, co-ordination and planning. Reflection and inquiry is of particular relevance to the staff because one of the stated requirements of the Headteacher is that the school is recognised as a centre for lifelong learning. All prospective applicants for posts at the school are interviewed by myself as the Professional Development Manager and are advised that there is an expectation that research and inquiry should be part of their every day practice. Their acceptance and therefore appointment onto the staff of the school is an indication of their willingness to undertake this. The idea of continuous learning by all members of the school is important and again an important consideration made by the IQEA project if improvement is to be successful. This reflection and inquiry is at personal and directorate level. At a personal level there is an expectation that all staff will continue to gain higher and further professional qualifications, again with the concept of the journey being as important as the end qualification itself. At directorate level, there is an expectation that teaching staff will be constantly accessing data from their pupils' performances. It will then be evaluated and the teaching practice changed if the data supports that. This whole school approach is recognised by the IQEA in the formation of groups of co-ordinators of these activities. I am developing what Hopkins *et al* (1994:110 & 2001) refers to as '*cadre*'. It is the formation of groups at the levels of the '*whole school*', '*working groups*', and '*the individual*' working in a co-ordinated way facilitated by this '*cadre*' that bring about the most effective change to practice. It is seen as a positive way of moving the school forwards and upwards in terms of achievement. Hopkins *et al* (1994: 7):

IQEA works on the assumption that schools are most likely to strengthen their ability to provide enhanced outcomes for all pupils when they adopt ways of working that are consistent with their own aspirations as well as the current reform agenda. This involves building confidence and capacity within the school, rather than reliance on externally produced packages – although good ideas from outside are never rejected out of hand.

At this point in the dialogue it would seem important to recognise the processes of change that have taken and are about to take place if achievement is to be raised. Evaluation of success will be the hard indicators of externally focussed criteria such as Key Stage examination results. In addition there will be the soft indicators of a change in a pupil's outlook on his or her learning and the raising of factors like self-esteem that go hand in hand with raising academic achievement.

My role as Professional Development Manager

It is in the arena of these initiatives that I identify that I have the most influence in my role as teacher and Professional Development Manager. My part in the whole process is twofold. Firstly as a member of the teaching staff involved in some of the initiatives with the focus of a whole school approach to improvement. My second role is that of Professional Development Manager. In that role I have a very definite responsibility to be involved in the improvement in teacher performance. Part of my educational theory is that if teachers can improve in their classroom practice, subject knowledge, and knowledge of how pupils of different academic abilities learn, they will be more effective as practitioners and levels of achievement will be raised. This is perhaps a simplistic view of the activities we are all engaged in, but it is the goal to which we aspire. Improvement is a combination of multiple activities, some situational, some professional and some motivational for both teachers and pupils. If the school can identify, address and achieve the appropriate learning environment and ethos, then perhaps this goal is not too simplistic after all. This is a technicist view, and as an institution, we should also be aware of the more subtle development that takes place at individual level for all members of the institution. There is a complex web of relationships and influences that add imperceptible benefit to everyone. As the Professional Development Manager and educator, I feel the imperative to maintain a school culture and environment where this influence can occur.

During this chapter I will show how my role of Professional Development Manager is intertwined within the initiatives. In addition, it will show the impact my learning, and the effect that my role had on initiation, implementation and evaluation, reflection and re-initiating of improvement activity; the classic Action Research Cycle in operation. These

initiatives and the ones already mentioned in the diary in Chapter 4 are the school's responses to a whole school focus on school improvement. Hopkins et al (1994:49) validates the school's actions '*We define school improvement as an approach to educational change that enhances student outcomes as well as strengthening the school's capacity for managing change*'. It is the management of this change and how it is undertaken that is central to my own learning and understanding.

In a very subjective way I feel that we should celebrate the activities we have been engaged in because as an educational institution we have moved forwards in our thinking, in our management, in our actions and in our results. For a number of years the school has relied on its reputation of excellence, and I feel it had plateaued in terms of its development. The jolt of the 1996 OFSTED report jerked us out of lethargy and into action. Complacency is a seductive weakness that well organised and well-managed organisations can easily slip into. A contradiction in terms maybe. Well organised and well managed yet complacent? – Well yes it does happen, and it happened at St John's. The celebration is two fold, one in recognising that complacency was happening and secondly by changing the learning environment we did something about it. As already stated this will not be a valedictory monologue, we had a considerable number of failures, but we also had significant success, and the examination results displayed in **Appendix 9** bear testimony to these successes. Another mark of success of which the school is proud in relation to these initiatives is that other schools are now visiting St John's to listen to our approach. For example, the current (2002) Yr 7 Curriculum Initiative is attracting national interest from local education authorities and sponsorship of the Royal Society of Arts.

Researching 'on' as opposed to 'with' my colleagues needs more consideration here. In Chapter 3, I engaged in dialogue about the wisdom of researching 'with' participants. It is almost too easy to adopt a managerial role of imposition, but both research literature and in-school evidence shows that this is not a productive way forwards. Bennett and Harris (1999) comment on the power bases that exist in schools, and the effect that this can have on research data and school outcomes. The classic examples are the Year 10 and 11 mentoring initiatives highlighted later in the chapter. As a manager then, I have learnt by experience that if I am to engage with the staff, it must be with their knowledge and consent. Reynolds notes in his paper that there has been a shift with the school improvement movement adopting a new strategy approach of the teacher researcher. This links the work of Joyce *et al* (1983, 1988, &1993), Mortimore (1991), Stoll and Fink

(1992) and Murphy (1992), all of whom in their own different areas of research are linking teacher orientated work with school processes like Development Planning. Reynolds (1995: 46) alludes to the IQEA project as another example of the synergy:

It is pupil outcome orientated, involves measurement of programme success or failure at outcome level but is also concerned with the 'within school' study of school processes from a qualitative orientation.

An introduction to three more exemplar initiatives viewed as Vignettes

It is my intention in this section of the chapter to highlight three more of the initiatives and to explain their working processes. During the narrative I will illustrate by the use of different approaches where I have had a direct influence on the raising achievement process.

The three initiatives chosen as exemplars are not documented in any specific order chronologically or in any degree of potential effectiveness. They indicate the involvement of myself and my learning with teachers and pupils in a whole school achievement raising process. What is important is that the reader realises the significance and importance with which the school is treating this area, and the genuine desire to help all its pupils to realise their full potential. What the school is anxious to avoid, is the problem of '*faddism*' as recognised by Robert Slavin (1989). There is a danger that unless the series of initiatives and strategies is managed effectively with appropriate reflection and evaluation being undertaken, too many ideas will be started with few of the initiatives being either of value or sustainable.

Vignette 2 The Yr. 11 Pupil Mentoring Initiative

My second vignette is different from the first studied in Chapter 6, in that it is pupil based. Hopkins *et al* (1994: 128) make a powerful point about interaction between teachers and pupils that the team has distilled from their work in the IQEA projects:

There is an assumption that schools are places where children and adults are skilful in working together, sharing their ideas and supporting one another. They are based on the assumption that there are two major resources for learning, the teacher and the children. They also assume that the teachers have the skills in organising their classes in ways that encourage co-operation.

If this co-operative power can be harnessed then achievement can surely be raised?

This is an initiative in two parts. It is taking up the concern expressed in January 1995 about middle ability pupils at GCSE. It is a concern of the school that this group of pupils does not seem to flourish in the way that the more able do, and that in the view of many

staff at the school they are underachieving. In hard commercial terms, it is in the interests of the school to pay particular attention to this group, as they are the children who at G.C.S.E level are going to achieve grade D. From the point of view of the school league tables, if the school can raise these Ds to Cs then the effects on the school and more importantly the pupils could be enormous. From the pupil's point of view, grade C is the gateway to higher and further education either at St John's or in other places of education. From the school's point of view, Grade C is the measurement point for school averages in the league tables and therefore of great significance to the school in its marketing process, with other schools in the area. It is written and recorded here in the present tense showing how I was part of the process as it happened at the time. This is the start of an Action Research cycle. From my field diary of the Autumn Term 1997 the entry below is taken:

24.11.97. Raising Ds to Cs at GCSE has become an issue for PKH. He raised it at SMT and floated the idea of each member of SMT taking a small number of Year11 pupils who fall into this category and closely monitor their work between now and the Summer examinations. He will ask the Directors for names.

At the Senior Management Team meeting of that date, the Headteacher and the Deputy Headteacher raised the issue once again of '*monitoring, evaluation and raising achievement issues, who what, when?*' This impetus was as a direct result of the then Deputy Headteacher attending a course on 'Wiltshire Value Added'. It has now become patently clear that as a school we are not as good as we thought we were, and the prognosis for the future, particularly for the current Yr 10 1997/8 cohort, was worse. (See results for this cohort in **Appendix 13**).

The statistics at this time show that our percentage of pupils attaining grades A – C at G.C.S.E in the 1997 summer examinations was not as good as many comparable schools given the quality of the intake we enjoy. To this end, the Headteacher decided that strong intervention action was required. Inspired by the article by Bray *et al* which he presented at the SMT meeting, he decided that all members of the SMT would be involved in a Pupil Mentoring Scheme for identified Yr.11 pupils whose majority of subjects were predicted at the C/D boundary. Mentoring is a particularly effective process of pupil/teacher interaction. The 1:1 relationship is ideal for monitoring progress and for the sensitive application of pressure and the personal identification of individual need. In addition, it was the intention of the initiative to involve parents and the teaching staff as well as the pupil in a partnership of improvement. Reynolds (1991) believes in what he calls an '*incorporative approach*' to progress, the incorporation of both the pupils and the parents, and he even extends the concept to members of the community. The idea of a supportive

network is vital if success is to be achieved. Stoll (1991) takes the concept further. She encourages the involvement and indeed responsibility in their own learning and organisation. Stoll (1991) sees planning, discussion and decision making activities as an important part of pupil learning which should be encouraged. IQEA have used this concept of involvement extensively in their development activities. Some of the practical suggestions from the Bray paper particularly highlighted for the team's attention were:

- ***Short-term goals set and tested for pupils in each subject. Work to be broken down to help structure the learning of underachievers, with the need to revise emphasised, and guidance given on how to do this.***
- ***Reward and praise emphasised in a 3:1 ratio to sanctions as part of a whole school policy.***
- ***Clearly stated learning objectives shared with pupils (often given in writing) for each module of work, linked to a progressive scheme of work. This will differ for each group of children.***
- ***Offer positive comments in class books, not just marks. KS4 pupils prefer private acknowledgement whereas KS3 pupils often accept public acclaim more readily.***
- ***Set short-term targets in all work attempted.***
- ***Use more visual stimuli and quick fire activities for boys.***
- ***Place an emphasis on presentation skills.***
- ***Give specific handwriting help and use word processors for motivation.***
- ***Boys are disorganised, they do not use the skills they have, boys and girls have the same ability range, but boys do not achieve the same level.***

Having floated the idea and obtained agreement from the team, it was decided to raise it at the next meeting and the Headteacher agreed to write a briefing paper to support it. This group would be similar to the existing Yr.10 target setting pilot group. The difference being that all Yr. 11 pupils who fall into the C/D boundary for the majority of their subjects would be part of this group whereas only one random tutor group in Yr.10 is taking part in that initiative. At the SMT meeting of 1.12.97 agenda item 3 was the Yr.11 focus group. The briefing paper was distributed and read as follows:

Agenda Item 3 Yr. 11 Focus Groups proposal for SMT consideration:

In an attempt to raise the achievement of pupils considered to be on the C/D borderline, I would propose that;

- ***Following mock examinations pupils on these borderlines are identified.***
- ***They are then split into groups of three / four on the basis of:***
 - i. Subject similarity***
 - ii. Number of subjects e.g. 3,4,5 on the boundary area***
 - iii. Attitude and aptitude***
- ***Each member of SMT + SNT + SMH (and possibly others) take one group each and act as a personal mentor from January through to May.***
- ***Objectives will be set to ensure that course work deadlines are met, problems resolved, revision programmes followed, personal confidence is boosted and that support needed to improve the grade is given.***

There is an issue for the school to address here as a matter of morality. A concerned parent might ask 'why are some groups of the Year11 cohort receiving special treatment when others are not?' The answer on behalf of the management team is that no pupil is being disadvantaged by this initiative, indeed raising awareness of this initiative may well benefit all students. That is to say, because teachers are considering the needs of the target group, they will have a heightened awareness of their teaching activities with the whole class. To answer the specific however, there is sufficient flexibility within the process to take additional pupils on board should they request it. (Indeed, Emma Seerley in my group did join as a direct result of parental request). It does, in the end, become a resource and time limited restriction. The planned operation will be stretched to accommodate the numbers and so a huge increase will not be possible. Therefore there could be criticism from those who are not included. This issue will have to be addressed and managed if such a criticism arises. (In the event, no complaints were received).

Following the mock examinations in November and the publication of the results in December, the Director of KS4 drew up a list of possible recipients. A meeting of these pupils was then held on 9.1.98 together with the Headteacher and the KS4 Director. The process was explained to them all. If they were happy to take part, a letter of explanation was sent home to their parents explaining the process.

It was intended that the first meeting for all the pupils and their mentor should be held on 14.1.98, with the purpose of the meeting to be to:

- a) Establish contact.
- b) Look at the grade profile. (The Mock exam results were distributed).
- c) Identify personal perceptions of need/difficulty/aspirations.
- d) Set a date for the next meeting with a view to revision programming, establishing lines of communication between subject teachers and senior mentors, checking that targets are set and met.

At the start of the first meeting, each pupil was asked to complete the 'soft indicator' (**Appendix 3**) questionnaire of how they feel about themselves. This was a crude tool developed by myself. I piloted it with a number of pupils of differing ages and academic abilities both for understanding and effectiveness. As a result of these preliminary tests I felt that it might be a useful tool to use in this circumstance. It is intended that at the end of the process in May, the questionnaire will be repeated to see if the pupils feel differently about themselves and their attitude to learning.

Also at that first meeting very short-term targets were set to get the pupils used to the idea of bringing evidence to support the claims they may make about targets being achieved. Since that time the individuals have been meeting regularly and each pupil is now beginning to show confidence in the developing relationship. I have been seeing my pupils on a regular basis and they are all without exception meeting the targets negotiated at the end of each meeting. The process is a long way from being perfect however and both the pupils and the teachers need more experience of short-term goal setting. It will be more appropriate and effective with the next year's cohort. By then sufficient experience will have been gained to make the experience more worthwhile. The teaching staff has been very co-operative, but they too need the benefit of experience to hone the process into a more effective tool. The final evaluation of the initiative's effectiveness will of course be the hard indicator of the summer external examinations.

A critique of the management of the initiative

The initial formulation of the initiative was a top down process. This style was shown not to be totally effective by IQEA. The Headteacher and the Deputy Headteacher between them imposed this initiative on the staff. As a consequence not all the staff involved were totally behind the project. In my paper Boshier (1998) (Appendix 2), I made the following points:

An initial analysis of these results gives a disappointing but not unexpected picture. The interviews with the pupils conducted in May prior to the examinations showed a feeling of raised self-esteem and raised organisational skills, but little comment was made by the pupils of the actual benefit in individual subjects gained from undertaking the initiative. In fact, as highlighted earlier, one teacher used the initiative as a tool to make the pupil feel different to others in the group with a very negative effect. This lack of impact on the pupils would seem to be apparent on examining the results. I feel that very few staff got 'underneath the skin' of the initiative. By that I mean that they did not feel personally involved in it or accept any real or extra responsibility towards these pupils above the rest of the pupils in the group. To that end, very little extra time was spent with these pupils as compared with the rest of the group and from the tutorials I held, the target pupils did not really have any great amount of extra work set for them. This is not a criticism of the staff however, but a criticism of the management of the process. As Hopkins et al (1996) confirms, ownership and involvement of any initiative is of vital importance to its success. In this case, it was an example of a 'top down' approach, a mini version of the old methodology of the effective schools movement. That is, the Headteacher imposed the initiative onto the staff with little consultation, and the staff being the professionals they are, adopted the scheme with good grace but did not own it. Consequently they did not engage thoroughly with it. Neither did the management team allocate any additional time or resources to the teaching staff, I also have a suspicion that some staff were not even aware that the process was 'en train' with their pupils.

Another issue that emerged as a result of the initiative implementation was that of equal opportunities. As I noted earlier, only some of the pupils were selected. In a school that professes an equality of opportunity for all policy, the school's actions were left wanting on this occasion.

An evaluation

During May 1998 I asked several of the pupils involved in the scheme to give me their feelings on its effectiveness. This I did by meeting with the whole group after an assembly and arranging a lunchtime date a week later. At the meeting, they agreed to their responses being taped, and also agreed to their names being recorded. I asked the pupils to complete the 'soft indicator' questionnaire again in order that I could measure the difference between their starting point and the completion of the scheme. I asked a series of questions in an attempt to see how they felt about the process. After the completion of the questionnaire the pupils stated that they had changed as follows:

Rory	<i>Self-esteem and motivation have gone up</i>
James	<i>Self-esteem motivation and expectations have gone up</i>
Edward	<i>Helping others had gone up</i>
Jodie	<i>Self-esteem and confidence increased</i>
Emma	<i>Self-esteem, organisation and motivation increased</i>
Michelle	<i>Organisation improved</i>
Stephanie	<i>Organisation improved</i>

I then asked the question 'Is there anything that you can now do that you were not able to do before?'

Answer '*Yes I am more organised*', '*I am better at revision*', '*I feel better in myself*'. '*I am much more confident*'.

When asked the question 'why do you think these changes occurred?' The answer from the group was that generally they felt that because they had been selected for the scheme. It had initially frightened them because for the first time they had to face up to the reality that they were on this D/C borderline and that was what they would achieve unless they took an active part in this process. There is a consideration to be made here of the 'research effect'. That is, unnatural or atypical behaviour from the sample group because they know they are being researched. My personal feelings are that the pupils very quickly became accustomed to the research concept of feeling special and the effect disappeared before the examination and the evaluation process took place. The results achieved were in my opinion a true reflection of the pupils and the process.

Rory '*I liked the idea at the start, it made me think about where I was. Being selected made me feel important*'.

The major criticism of the group was that the mentor did not meet with them often enough and they felt let down by this. The timing of the start of the scheme was about right i.e. January of Yr. 11. They wanted teachers to acknowledge that they were part of the scheme and needed extra help. Some of the pupils thought that several teachers were negative about the scheme, and used the pupil's participation as a 'stick' against them. A minority of staff made detrimental comments in lessons and the pupils felt that they were being picked on. As there was little consultation or involvement with all staff, some colleagues obviously felt excluded and reacted in this negative way. On the positive side, Jodie felt that she was now more positive in her approach to work, and that she feels more confident.

One of the key issues for teaching staff to understand was the pupils' comment on the completion of subject course work requirement. It became obvious during the interviews that this part of many subjects weighed heavily on the pupils, and until that was completed they were not prepared to spend time on other aspects of their work. What helped them of course was that the mentoring scheme focussed their attention on personal organisation, and that enabled them to complete their course work earlier than they otherwise might have. This is a really important lesson that we, the staff, must take into consideration if we repeat this initiative with the next Year 11 cohort. Time must be allowed for course work completion, and pupils encouraged into a frame of mind that will allow them to feel comfortable with this course work pressure. Now that it has been articulated the staff can take steps to remedy it.

The staff perspective

The issue of time was the most important aspect of the initiative. Many of the staff involved admitted that they did not do the pupils justice because they could not find the available time to do so. They felt that in future it would have to be built into the tutorial time frame so that quality time was available for both the pupil and the teacher.

Recommendations for the future

- the mentors need to meet more regularly with their tutees;
- all teaching staff need to embrace the scheme and be more encouraging to the pupils;
- the start time in January is appropriate but the preparations need to be made in December immediately after the Yr. 11 mock exams so that the process can have a running start;
- staff should recognise the burden of course work for these middle ability pupils and build it into their day to day workings. This is a management problem for pupils of all

abilities, but particularly for the middle ability who find management and organisation difficult;

- quality time for pupils and staff needs to be created so that regular and meaningful contact can be maintained.

Overall evaluation of the initiative

In the light of experience, the initiative should be tried again, but with considerable amendment.

1. Allocate more time and resources to the subject staff.
2. Involve the subject staff in the planning process before the initiative starts.
3. Allocate more time to the mentors.
4. Consider whether the SMT are the appropriate staff to be undertaking this activity. It does need senior staff but maybe the Directors of subjects would be more appropriate.
5. Involve the Form Tutors much more. They are the learning managers of the pupils and need to be heavily involved in the mentoring process.
6. Start the process at the same time, but identify the pupils earlier and have the programme ready to start at the beginning of the Spring Term, not begin the initial meetings with the pupils at that time. This should be completed at the end of the Autumn Term.
7. Look to expanding the initiative to embrace pupils who are in the grade E-C band. These are the pupils for whom organisation, application and motivation are a problem.
8. With the predicted grades for the 1998/9 cohort being as poor as they are, there will be a need to expand the mentoring team considerably and their planning needs to take place early in the Autumn Term so that all staff are prepared in time.

The overall outcome of the scheme from the pupils' point of view was that the majority felt they had moved their estimated grades from a D to a C. They felt confident about that, and in most cases their self-esteem and motivation had improved directly as a result of the initiative.

In addition to the Year 11 mentoring process, a similar process in Yr.10 is also taking place. Why Year 10? This question is easy to answer. This particular cohort of Year 10 according to the C.A.T data is much less academically able than many of the previous

years. As a consequence, the likelihood of a larger group of pupils being in the middle ranges the C/D area is higher. If the achievement of these pupils can be raised it will be of enormous help to them educationally. In addition, because we have identified the cohort a year before their external examinations, it will enable the school to put intervention activities in place if needed before the external examination period arrives.

Vignette 3: Raising Achievement Target Setting Pilot Yr. 10Y

This vignette shows the clear steps of the action cycle. The process of target setting is a Government requirement, and the 1997 '*Excellence in Schools*' paper is clear about the benefits to be gained in raising achievement through the target setting process.

This initiative has been initiated by KJS Deputy Headteacher and involves the setting of individual targets and the monitoring of them by the learning manager, their Form Tutor. The concept originated from a conference attended by KJS in July 1997 which addressed the then recently released white paper by the Government on 'Excellence in Schools'.

Plan

The intention is to use Year 10 tutor group as a pilot, making it whole school based once all the components of initiation, implementation, documentation and evaluation are satisfactorily in place, and if the evaluation is positive. The Head of Year 10 will also be an active participant in the project. The target tutor group selected was a considered choice made by KJS for the following reasons:

- The Form Tutor and learning manager EIB knows the tutor group very well, as she was their Form Tutor last year. This will help in the target setting process and in the monitoring of the progress made.
- It is a tutor group that has been identified using C.A.Ts and S.A.T predictions as containing more middle and low ability pupils than other tutor groups.
- KJS is available during the tutorial periods to assist with the administration of the process over a long period of time.
- EIB has a teaching period available once every two weeks because of the band split, which can be used to see individual pupils.

The implementation process

The tutor group of 27 pupils will be divided into three groups of nine. The pupils will be numerically allocated to each mentor; i.e. every third pupil will have the same mentor. The

mentors will keep the same nine pupils for the year. The Form Tutor EIB, KJS and GBD will have the close responsibility for those 9 pupils. They will be interviewed on a regular basis throughout the year with a plan to review the targets achieved and set new ones. The initial tutorial session will involve the mentor in collecting the base line data for the pupil's performances in the core subjects of Mathematics, English and Science. The data collected will be the KS3 S.A.T results.

Using this data the three staff mentors will then hold discussions with each of their tutees. It will be very clear where the pupils are located in terms of achievement for each subject from the KS3 results, and therefore allow for targets to be set in the areas where there are deficiencies.

In November, the subject staff for each of the pupils in the tutor group will be asked to estimate a potential GCSE grade for their subject. A comparison will be made by the mentors of potential subject grades based on classroom performance from the subject teachers against the minimum average GCSE grade. Any differential will then have to be the target for action.

In order to keep the parents informed of this initiative, an initial letter will be sent home explaining the whole process, and a parents' evening will be held in the Spring Term. Each set of parents together with the pupil will be invited to a 10-minute interview with the appropriate mentor.

The evaluation process

This will take two forms. The three mentors will regularly evaluate the procedural process, and the Form Tutor (EIB) will be a crucial part of this process. She will be the one person in daily contact with the tutor group and will be able to comment specifically on the process of target achievement in action.

The evaluation of the end product i.e. the actual performance at the KS4 GCSE examination will be one of the validating forces. During the interim period, the achievement of the goals set for each pupil will be reviewed and a short-term evaluation undertaken. The other evaluative process will be achieved by conversations with the pupils.

The Learning Manager's observations

In conversation with EIB in June 1998, she had the following observations to make about the first year of the project. The parents' evening was very positive and the parents thought that to have them and the pupil together with the teacher setting the goals and targets was very helpful. Since that time, the Form Tutor has reviewed the results from the Year 10 summer examinations and subject staff have made projected grade predictions in all subject areas. These grades are now being used to establish further goals for the autumn term. After the mock examinations in November a further set of targets will be negotiated.

Some pros and cons – re plan

There is a positive feel to the pupils when they leave the mentoring session because they know where to go next, and this helps in the motivation of the pupil. The down side of the system is the lack of time available for the teacher to give the 1:1 tutorials. They are planned for one about every half term, and some of the pupils forget what their targets are during that time. The theory is that they write them down in their contact books, and the tutor keeps a record, but sometimes this does not happen. As part of this Action Research Cycle, re-planning has now taken place. It will be more satisfactory next year because I have re-designed the contact book so that there is a specific space at the back to enter these targets. In addition, the Form Tutor will have more time with her tutees because there has been a change in the time allocation for tutorial, and no commuting problems. So easier and more regular contact will be possible. I asked the question 'Do you feel that the project had been a success? Elaine's answer was:

I feel it is worthwhile, but we won't know until next year if the grades have improved. I do feel that any time an individual teacher can spend with a pupil is valuable. They get so used to being part of a large group or class and not all pupils get 1:1 contact. Some rarely get 1:1 contact with any adult and so are not used to talking to them, so it is valuable in a social sense let alone from an academic point of view. In addition, it helps the pupil / teacher relationship if you also happen to teach that pupil. As a Form Tutor, in the past, the end of term reports often came as a surprise. Now because I am seeing the pupils on a regular basis I have a much better idea of where they are and what they are achieving.

Elaine went onto say that at the start of the project she had reservations about the top and middle ability pupils benefiting from the scheme, whereas the lower ability pupils would miss out. In practice, she has not found this to be the case. She cited a low ability boy who was very anti the scheme at the outset, and resented having to have 1:1 discussions in front of his friends. However, when he was away from them in the privacy of an interview room, he was able to admit his difficulties and was much more open in conversation about the

benefits of the scheme for him. Weiner (1992) has researched into the way pupils respond to feedback from teachers. He found that it is crucial that the teacher understands the pupil and how they work as well as understanding what they are capable of achieving. Weiner also found that if the pupil thinks they have underachieved and could have done better, they are likely to consider a more positive attempt next time. If however the teacher feedback is too critical and the teacher has not understood how the pupil works and thinks, then the results of increased motivation will be less positive. Kershner *et al* in Rudduck *et al* (1996: 81) make the point that:

Pupil's approaches to new tasks will be influenced by their understanding of how well they responded to similar tasks in the past and why they were or were not successful. This in turn will affect their confidence about how successful they are likely to be this time and, consequently their eagerness to make an effort.

Bandura (1981) would argue that the most significant aspect of the statement above would be the pupils' beliefs in their ability to undertake the task. There are clear pointers here for us all. The mentor when approaching the process of target setting needs to know the pupil well and to couch the target setting process in a framework of acceptance for that pupil. Then there is a more general need for us all as teachers to appreciate that we have a major task on our hands. The concept of differentiation has posed teachers with lesson planning problems for years. If we are to appreciate the wisdom of Bandura's work, then each pupil must believe that they are capable of achieving the next task they are set. If we fail in this task then we cannot expect our pupils to be successful and the level of achievement will not be raised. To this end, here is another pointer for me to disseminate these concepts to all staff. My role as Professional Development Manager will be central to this task. In fact there are two roles here, as a teacher and as a facilitator of professional development. This is a central and key part of my thesis, my role in the school and my involvement with the pupils.

I then asked if we should start the scheme again next academic year for the whole Yr.10 cohort? Again Elaine felt that the positive effects made this worthwhile although the logistics were formidable, and until the results are available for this year's cohort in the summer of 1999, we are not sure of the ultimate value in academic terms. Socially however, Elaine agreed with the findings I have indicated earlier for the Yr. 11 project. That is, that it raises pupil confidence and self-esteem, improves organisation and gives them an opportunity to talk on a one to one basis. There are a group of pupils, probably in the middle ability range who need the 'push' of the prearranged tutorial session to motivate them into action. They know what they should do but it's all too much trouble for them unless this external force pushes them, then they will achieve levels above their normal

range. Bruner's (1968) work on motivation both extrinsic and intrinsic shows that motivation is an important factor in the achievement process. There is a clear link between motivation, the pupils' work strategies and their attainment. Teachers have got to be aware that there has to be interest and motivation in taking part in the learning process in the classroom (intrinsic motivation), and also in the extrinsic motivation of the rewards for example of examination success at the end of the process. Wehlage *et al* (1989) looked at '*impediments to educational engagement*' and these are crucial pieces of information for all teachers. If the rewards of examination success are not there, or the lessons are de-motivating or lacking in interest, then raising achievement will always be a 'pipe dream'. Recognising these '*impediments*', my role of Professional Development Manager comes in here as I must encourage teachers to recognise when pupils are de-motivated and consider changes in teaching style to re-motivate. Other factors making this a worthwhile venture are that with the early identification of levels of performance, there is time for intervention to be implemented before the external examinations. Parents and pupils recognised and valued this, this year.

A management criticism

Once again like the Yr.11 initiative, there is an issue here of equality of opportunity. For the reasons stated earlier only one tutor group was involved in this pilot. It revolved around staffing and resource availability, but it could be argued that all pupils in Yr.10 deserved the right to take part in this mentoring process. The answer as far as the school is concerned is that 'yes they should', but with limited resources, if the pilot was not successful then there could be a criticism levelled of resource mismanagement.

Another issue is that of inclusion. I have been recognising through the work of IQEA the need to research with, and include pupils in the process, and the work of Thiessen (1997) and Fielding (2001) supports this. Here again the management and implementation was faulty, as it was a top down imposition with the inclusion of the pupil voice afterwards.

What role did I and can I play as the Professional Development Manager in this process?

The role I played was that of showing and sharing my practice with the other mentors involved. I had a number of conversations at various times between January 1998 and May 1998 where I exchanged views and progress reports with my colleagues. In the future my role is very clear. I need to initiate the training and preparation process as suggested in the evaluation above, in good time for the new cohort. I intend to use this as a case study for

critique by staff groups in the school. For my Middle Management Training Group, this will be an ideal study in a management process. The group is involved in undergoing staff development to become middle management, and this case study will act as an example of a process that was not fully successful. It will allow for analysis and discussion with the intention that the same sort of mistakes will not be made again and to establish new ways of moving forward. One of these new ways will be to get the pupils more involved in the processes and work with them, not on them.

With the Action Research Group, I presented a paper on this initiative as a discussion point for the group. There was a certain reticence to write or talk about practice, and I volunteered to produce the paper for the next meeting in the Autumn Term 1998 to start the ball rolling. I would like other colleagues to feel able to undertake some small-scale research, collect data and present papers to the group. The proposed outcome of these papers was to disseminate them to the rest of the staff and to publish them on the Intranet and Internet as examples of practice being undertaken at the school. I also intended to publish the results to the staff for their appreciation of the success and problems associated with the initiative. There was already an interest in the statistics of the initiative, and I felt that by publishing the data, more staff would be encouraged to become small-scale Action Researchers.

The micro politics in the school must not be overlooked. School Improvement literature keeps reminding us that the teachers must be involved and part of any change. Any change in ideas even if they are initiated externally must be internalised by the teachers and the pupils if they are to succeed. This is a massive challenge for me as the Professional Development Manager. Fullan and Pomfret's (1987) work on how the curriculum is negotiated and interpreted in the classroom shows the success of such involvement, and a lack of this involvement may well have accounted for the failure of initiatives aimed at raising school improvement in the past. The work done by Fullan and Park (1981) shows that the implementation of a significant curriculum or organisational change such as the initiative in Year 11 or Year 10 mentoring will probably involve one or more of the features below, as recorded in Hopkins (1994:25)..

***Changes in the structure and organisation of the school: for example, timetabling or the formation of new working groups.
New or additional teaching materials; for example worksheets or books.
Teachers acquiring new knowledge; for example in working with information technology.***

Teachers adopting new behaviours in terms of teaching styles; for example, the non-didactic or consultancy approach often associated with resource based learning.

Changes in beliefs or values on the part of some teachers; for example, in the early days of the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (T.V.E.I) many teachers did not believe that the initiative was a good thing.

This shows that any change is a 'multidimensional' activity and if the staff are not involved in these dimensions change will not happen. So it was, with the Year 11 mentoring scheme. There was little involvement, little change in performance or teaching involvement. Hoyle (1986), Ball (1987), Hargreaves (1986) and Woods (1986) all show the effect of micro politics in the change process. In many schools, the game is played between those who wish to bring about change, often the Senior Management Team, and those who have to implement that change, the teachers and the pupils. The end product is a negotiated outcome that involves some compromise; in today's jargon a 'win/win' situation for all concerned. Huberman (1992: 17) looking at the process in schools notes:

What often happens is that there are usually dozens of bargains being struck along the way. Try out this programme and we'll get some interesting materials and training. Let the principal have her visibility from this new project and she'll let us modify it to suit our purposes or our constraints...

If these change processes are not in place, or are not embracing the teachers and the pupils, then research shows that the probability of success is reduced.

The next round of the cycle started in October 1998, when the decision to undertake the same exercise again with the next cohort of Year 11 pupils, was made. The decision was again taken by the Senior Management Team to take the pupils who were predicted with more than 2 Grade Cs after the mock examinations in November 1998. This level of academic attainment was an indicator that these pupils could probably improve their performance given the extra focus of this initiative. The Principle Tutor was charged with gathering the information about the pupils, and the newly appointed Assistant Learning Manager (EIB) was given the task of project co-ordinator. This appointment made a great deal of sense, as it was EIB who had already been closely involved with the Year 10 project the year before, (Vignette 3).

Another significant step forward, learned from the results of the previous year, was to extend the invitation to take part in the initiative to all pupils who fell into the appropriate category in Yr 11. In order to accommodate this, extra mentors would be needed. In addition, the experiences of the previous year were to be used as a model for training those

staff who were new to the initiative. To help in this process, my report, Boshier (1998), gave guidance on the mentoring process. In addition, training sessions would be held, and I had been asked to speak to them in order to pass on my experiences. Both of these activities are important and central to my role as the Professional Development Manager.

Learning from this Vignette

The other area of advice and learning accruing from the previous experience was the involvement with the pupils and staff. This time all staff were to be briefed prior to the initiative starting, would receive clear information at the start and during the process and have regular contact with the organiser, the Assistant Learning Manager. This would obviate the feeling of disenfranchisement that clearly contributed to the lack of success in the previous trial. Time, another important factor had been made available this time round. The school introduced a 'rolling tutorial programme' at the start of the academic year, and there had been agreement that this mentoring process would be an ideal activity for that period. In addition, the pupils themselves were consulted and involved in the process. The 'pupil voices' were heard this time through the minutes of consultation meetings, and more importantly listened to. The continuation of this initiative is the start of a new Action Research cycle, and is also an example of the school as a whole and individuals, including me in particular, learning from experience.

This vignette has shown how the school is making an attempt at classroom level with the pupils in the process of raising achievement. How is it helping the staff? I see this in a number of positive ways. Firstly, in the process of communication with the pupils, unless this is clear, the conduit for learning stops. Any form of improvement in the communication process has to be for the better. My research with Alan Shelton and the pupils has shown that, if relationships are good, trust ensues and respect often follows. That is mutual respect on both sides, and as seen in the vignette of the 'good teacher' this definitely has a positive effect on the learning process. The pupil has to be central to the process and if the management of their own learning is to be enhanced. With the teacher acting as a facilitator in that process, it has to be positive.

There is clear evidence in this vignette of the Action Cycle at work, and the evaluation phase starts the next cycle. My learning will be part of that new cycle as I help colleagues new to the scheme, become involved in the process. Additionally I can help to embed the process into the culture of the school.

Vignette 4 Self-Esteem Tests and Raising Achievement 1996/7 cohort

My hypothesis is that self-esteem and pupil performance is interrelated. If a pupil has low self-esteem, then success on the educational journey is often difficult to achieve, and almost always results in a lower level of achievement than the pupil with high self-esteem. That is not to say that in many cases the pupil is intellectually unable to perform at a higher level, but that they cannot or will not because of their poor self-image. Burns (1982:229) notes:

For pupils to learn in school, it appears self-evident that they need sufficient confidence in themselves and in their competencies to make some effort to succeed. Without self-confidence it is easy to succumb to apathy, despondency, and loss of self-control.

This will be the case for some of the pupils in the cohort addressed by the 'Blitz' initiative (No 17). Their poor attainment in an academic scenario, related to the despondency it then engenders, manifests itself as poor behaviour both in and out of the classroom. This is further supported by Burns (1982:231) whose research demonstrated that bad readers lack a sense of worth to a point where they adopt a position in their lessons where they actively avoid achievement.

For bad readers, to study hard and still fail provides unbearable proof of their inadequacy. To avoid such proof, many students deliberately choose not to try. Their defence against failure is secretly to accept themselves as failures. It is better from the student's point of view not to read at all than to read poorly: it is better not to try than be embarrassed or humiliated.

I don't think that this phenomenon is just related to reading. Those pupils with poor self-image undertake this sort of avoidance strategy across the range of their academic subjects leading to a problem greater than just poor achievement. It has a knock on effect to other pupils in the class, it leads to poor behaviour which is also infectious, and it leads to a self-fulfilling prophecy for the teachers. Most teachers would profess to be impartial and encouraging to the efforts of their pupils. However, if a pupil constantly misbehaves in class, constantly underachieves at best and does not try at worst, the effect on the teacher does become somewhat negative. With the day-to-day demands of the other pupils in the class, eventually the pupil is projected as a low achiever. Then expectation and result are intertwined into the conspiracy of low attainment. Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) worked on teacher expectation in some San Francisco schools. The teachers were fed false information about some of their pupils IQs and left them to work in school for a year. Their research results conclusively showed that pupil attainment would alter dramatically depending on what the teacher believes or is led to believe are the pupil's ability. This is

the self-fulfilling prophecy they called the '*Pygmalion effect*' after the character in Shaw's (1912) book. While the results and interpretations of those research results have been questioned by Snow (1969), Brophy and Good (1974) have confirmed that teacher expectation effects do occur. Burns (1982:232) comments that:

The completion of the cycle between teacher input and pupil output is formed by expectancy effects. If the learner thinks himself as inferior, his actions will tend to be those of an inferior person and will confirm to his teacher and peers the reasonableness of treating him as inferior.

With these ideas in mind, it was with great concern that the SMT received a report from the school nurse in April 1996. This report was the result of data gained from her annual medical examinations of pupils in Year 9 in the 1995/6 academic year. She reported that she found a considerable number of pupils with very low self-esteem, and she was concerned from a medical point of view about their health. With the knowledge of the difficulties that low self-esteem brings to pupils, there was a direct need to establish the level of this trait amongst the pupils in the school and then introduce some measures to raise this self-esteem, should it be found to be a major concern. In the conclusion to Burn's (1982:247) chapter on '*Teachers' Expectancies*' in his book he makes the following observation:

A teacher can get more out of a student – and lead him to get more out of himself – by building up through encouragement than destroying him. We need to stress the positive, the fact that we expect him to succeed rather than give the impression that we would be surprised if he succeeded. It is particularly important that the child's first attempts at a task are successful. Some degree of failure is inevitable, but he should not fail too soon, nor too often. The child faced with unrealistic goals or impossible demands will either have to incorporate failure as a part of his self-image or avoid conflict by being uninterested.

SMT felt that remedial action for the Year 9 pupils was probably too late to have any real effect. If the school could identify pupils with this state of mind as they entered the school in Year 7, then there was opportunity to attempt to change their outlook before too much educational damage was done. There is a clear start to an Action Research cycle here. To this end, I worked with KMP who was the assistant Head of Year for Yr. 7 to implement some sort of test which would help identify the size of the problem and give some quantifiable data to work on. We decided to use the test devised by our colleague Andy Packer (1994). He had used a test with Yr. 11 as part of his M.A research and he felt that it was a reasonable predictor of self-esteem. A copy of the test can be found in **Appendix 14**. It was a self-report type of assessment with a rating scale. Packer acknowledges the basis of this assessment is as a result of the work of Burns (1982), Coopersmith (1981), Lawrence (1981) and particularly the work of Mullis *et al* (1992) who researched into

longitudinal change in adolescent self-esteem. To support this type of report, Argyle and Lee (1972:163) state:

Self-reports do reveal characteristics of self and important considerations for teachers. Used sensitively, self-reports give rich insights into how the child sees himself and his world.

The test had two components, one that tested the child's overall self-esteem, and one that tested their academic self-esteem. While I acknowledge this as a crude unscientific and untried test, if it provided any sort of reliable data, the school would be able to act upon those findings. It was agreed by the SMT that such a test could be undertaken with the incoming new Yr. 7 cohort for the academic year 1996/7. The test content and administration was piloted by KMP with her current tutor group 7Y 1995/6, and the administration procedure had been devised by KMP during this pilot. Two amendments were required from the pilot, these were made and the format altered accordingly. In view of the positive data achieved from this pilot, KMP gave a short paper to the Heads of Department at Academic Issues meeting on 12.6.96 about how the results of the test will be used. She said:

We feel that along side the C.A.Ts scores, the pupil profile will be much more accurate. The results would probably be recorded on a Tutor Group list noting those with particularly high or particularly low self-esteem. I would welcome any comments on whether this information would be useful to subject areas.

These tests were carried out during the Induction visits to St John's in July 1996.

All pupils from the feeder primary school undertook the test. It was administered by KMP with the help of MBM as part of the induction programme.

The test

The test was administered on the pupil's second visit to the school in order to ensure that the stress of being in a new and strange environment did not impinge too much on the test results. The pupils were then in their new tutor groups. The Form Tutors, having met them on a previous occasion, were able to support any pupils who may have been feeling apprehensive. Once the first batch of tests had been completed KMP passed them to me for analysis. I am fulfilling three roles here, the role of an encourager and of an interested teacher. In my Professional Development Manager role, I want to encourage any initiative that will move the school forwards in its quest for improvement. In addition, encouragement of staff is important. Their self-esteem must also be considered. If I can boost that in any way by encouragement then I must do so. I think this was the case with

KMP. She is a very experienced teacher with an excellent educational idea. I felt that if I could offer help in a non-threatening way by undertaking some of the 'dogs body' jobs of scoring, then she was more likely to develop the initiative further. If she had to do it all, then it was likely to fail because of the sheer overload of work onto one member of staff. I was also interested in the concept of self-esteem and its effects on the education of children. If we as a school could make the learning process more positive, then I should as a teacher, be involved in that process.

An analysis of the results for this cohort was then used in a variety of ways in terms of school improvement. We have all learnt from the administration of the test, and from the data achieved, the knowledge of which will guide future actions. The data achieved will have an organic growth of its own, developing more effective and efficient ways of managing children's abilities. It will highlight the able, confident and well-balanced achievers, and also enable the school to identify for the first time those pupils who need extra care and attention if they are to flourish in the school environment. My role is to continue encouraging this process.

Analysis of this initiative is rewarding in two ways. If I re-state the question of myself as Professional Development Manager working with staff to improve the achievement of pupils, here is a good example of that process in action. It seemed to me to be an important period for the school at the start of this improvement process, and I was not prepared to let it falter through lack of encouragement. In addition, both KMP and myself recognised the potential value of the data to teachers, and I thought it crucial to get this data collecting process together with the subsequent analysis into the learning environment of the school. Six years on in 2002, the process is now fully accepted as part of the base line data gathering process available for teachers, and is used on a regular basis for academic decisions, monitoring and evaluations of pupil progress.

The initiatives and strategies discussed have involved myself and the staff in a whole school improvement process. In terms of effectiveness, there have certainly been changes made. The school as a whole is more conscious now of the need to improve all its pupils, and with the increase in data available, is much better informed as to who particularly requires more intense attention being paid to them. The successes of some initiatives like the self-esteem and C.A.T testing are balanced against the poor response to the GNVQ initiative of EXB.

Summary

This chapter, together with Chapter 6 has highlighted 4 vignettes that the school is undertaking in its attempt to raise the achievement of its pupils. Many of the other initiatives noted in Chapter 4 are ongoing, and it is too early in their establishment to effectively evaluate their impact. What is clear however is that sustainability is a major issue for the school to address. The echoes of Slavin's '*faddism*' are still around, and to establish what, from these initiatives, is effective and therefore worth embedding into the culture of the school, has got to be addressed. Initiative overload has got to be recognised, as has the management of change. Over time, the staff have ridden a roller coaster of emotion. After the elation of successfully managing the redundancy issue mentioned earlier, the school was able to settle down to the real devoted endeavour of raising achievement. The initiatives discussed in this Chapter do not really do justice to the hard work and enthusiasm of the staff who were implementing them. There was a truly collegiate feel to the portfolio of new developments and an optimism that as a school we were moving forward again after a low period of despondency.

Exciting times for the school were produced from the effects of a changed management structure and a new Senior Management Team. The empowerment of authority to take decisions at a lower level in the management chain, a stronger feeling of team identity and a greater level of both accountability and authority have all helped move the whole school forward in the thrust for improvement. As a consequence there have been increases in efficiency and a harder edge to the processes of monitoring, evaluation and target setting. The initiatives have also brought an increased scientific rigour to what was previously a simple 'gut reaction approach'. Our aim is to develop the characteristics of an effective school as delineated by Joyce *et al* (1993: 72):

All have a focus on specific student learning outcomes. None have only goals of the 'to make exam results go up' variety.

All have employed strategies tailored to their goals and backed by rationales grounded in theory, research, good practice, ones own experience, or a combination of these.

All have employed substantial amounts of staff development in recognition that any development involves teacher and student learning.

All have monitored learning outcomes on a regular basis, they have not left evaluation to a yearly examination.

We are not there yet but it is not for the will in trying. Many of the characteristics in the quotation are found embedded within the portfolio of the school's initiatives. This change

in approach also shows the developing characteristics of Southworth's (1994) *Learning School*, and Stoll's (1999) '*internal capacity for change*'.

I would like to think that in my role I engender such an atmosphere in the school. It is the considerable challenge that I face with enthusiasm tinged with apprehension.

Chapter 8 - A Personal Development Review

The strands and journeys start to come together in this penultimate chapter. In particular I try to make sense of my personal development journey with a review of my teaching traits and the influence that I perceive my personality has on these. I then undertake an examination of my personal position as a researcher and a teacher.

The previous chapters have told the story of the various journeys that I have undertaken as part of my personal and professional life. They have also described some of the activities the school has undertaken in its efforts to raise achievement and bring about school improvement, and the part I played in that process. Some of the successes and failures of those initiatives are noted in **Appendix 9** together with an up to the moment commentary on those ongoing initiatives. As already stated, hard evidence is not readily available for some of the initiatives because their span of activity has not come to its projected conclusion time. What I will do here, is to try and make sense of the images I have described in the creation of my living educational theory, and pull together the strands of my activity in relation to others in my professional world. Zeichner (1998) in his paper at the American Educational Research Association annual conference in May 1998 said '*The most significant development in teacher educational research is the creation of the self-study*'. This concept is at the heart of the mission statement for the school and as the Professional Development Manager it is a major part of my brief to encourage and facilitate this with my colleagues.

In the creation of my living educational theory, I need to have a clear view of myself as others see me in order to explain and locate my actions in reality. To that end, I include the section below.

A personal focus: a view of me as I see myself

In Chapter 2 I noted what my pupils see and how they feel about my approach to teaching. In order to validate and confirm that evidence further, a fellow researcher has conducted an extended and in depth observation of me at work. She has observed a series of lessons taught by me, and conducted an extended de-brief and reflective after thought, following each observation. The reflective process has caused me to analyse further my thought processes as I teach, and has added another insight into the development process of my

living educational theory. It is difficult to divorce the influences of my personality from those of the professional with many years experience.

Effective learning and achievement by the students is the result of what has been known for many years as '*teacher skills*'. Research by Brophy and Good (1986) into the correlation between achievement scores and classroom processes, Doyle (1987) into the way information is delivered in the classroom and Brophy (1983) who looked at teacher behaviour and associated student achievement has all involved analysing the skills of the practitioner. My argument is that in addition to this competence comes the additional factor of the human teacher effect. This is the area that I consider is a rich vein to follow, firstly, to analyse its component parts, and then to allow dissemination of data to help other teachers in their developing competence. Much work done by the researchers Armstrong (1980), Holt (1964), Loudon (1991) and Rowland (1984) has involved examination of how primary teachers work in the classroom. In the secondary sector, Hargreaves (1982), Woods (1980) and Hull (1985) have looked respectively at discipline in the classroom, communication between teachers and pupils, behaviour and general life in the classroom. The teacher influences all of these foci, and how the teacher works and reacts is central to lesson outcomes. Ainscow and Tweedle (1988) have developed a mechanism for giving the teacher the skills to review their own practice, and provide an analysis that is valuable to teachers. With this reflective and analytical framework, teachers can review, evaluate and improve in a true Action Research cycle that enhances performance and improves practice in the future. To that end, the in-depth analysis of my own practice will enable me to do the same.

An analysis of my learning about my teaching

A crucial element in the understanding of how I help others, is to continue to reflect and analyse how I work as an individual, as a teacher and as a manager. If I am to explain what I do and how I do it, I must be clear in my own mind about how I operate and be clear about the perceptions of others. My learning has become apparent, as I have undertaken this research. The process itself has encouraged me to become reflective and evaluative both of others and myself. To help me to reflect on my own practice, I have used another doctoral researcher, Mrs Susan Gibbs from the University of Bath. She has been engaged with me in the process of lesson observation, tape recording and video taping my teaching in action over a period of several months starting in September 1998. In addition to the observations made by Mrs Gibbs, I have independently analysed and reflected upon my

teaching styles and strategies. Over time it has become apparent to me that I think and act in the following ways. These reflections are noted below, and are not ordered to indicate strength of action, they are just observations as they have occurred to me.

My teaching style revolves around my understanding of the personalities of the pupils and their needs. As I get to know pupils as individuals, so I involve them more in the fabric of my lessons and develop my professional relationship with them. When asking for responses in the classroom, I measure the need I have for that response against individual pupils and encourage them to respond with a variety of different reasons in mind. It may be because:

- a. I think they can make a valuable response even if their response is incorrect.
- b. I know they know the answer to the question I have asked.
- c. They are not paying attention and I need to get them back on task.
- d. They are not fully engaged in the lesson and I need to give them the opportunity to become so.
- e. I need to test the understanding of the concepts I have just taught.
- f. Their response will add humour to the lesson.
- g. I want to raise their self-esteem.
- h. From their previous dialogue they have an interesting and related point to make.
- i. They have indicated that they have a question related to their understanding.
- j. Their body language indicates that they do not understand.

I use very colourful and vivid verbal images to help the learning of the concept. These images are very important to me. They are not pre-planned, but occur spontaneously at the moment of delivery. However they are very real to me to a point of visually appearing in front of my mind as I describe them to the class. These images are intentionally of every day things that I know the group will be able to identify with. An extract from the Susan Gibbs paper found as **Appendix 15** supports my observations.

By talking to Mike and observing his lessons, I have noticed that he sometimes perceives the subject content in the form of visual images. These either form the basis of his explanation of the Biological concept for the example he presents to the students or alternatively may actually project the visual image onto different members of the group to help them to develop their own understanding of the subject content. I would therefore suggest that imagery form a part of Mike's pedagogical content knowledge.

I visualise the whole teaching and learning process as a series of spinning wheels or plates. The spinning wheels are all related to each other and are going at different speeds. As any

lesson progresses I feel the need to speed some wheels up and slow others down. These spinning wheels are:

My pedagogical subject knowledge.

My lesson plan for that particular lesson.

My plans for the series of lessons.

My knowledge of the whole syllabus and how this lesson or series of lessons fits into that syllabus.

My knowledge of the personalities of the individuals in the group.

An identification and assessment of their individual learning needs.

An identification of the overall learning needs of the group.

My experience of the variety of teaching strategies and techniques available to facilitate learning and the application of the most appropriate at that time.

An empathetic feel for sensitive interpersonal relationships.

An intuitive response to situations as they arise, guided by previous experience of similar situations.

A range of subject knowledge associated with the topic being taught.

Current affairs of immediate interest and the interweaving of these topics into the lesson as appropriate.

A background knowledge of what team teaching colleagues are teaching at the same time so that different areas are related for the pupils.

A knowledge of my personality and how it is likely to affect the group.

An appreciation of my own educational experiences and its affect on my teaching style.

An appreciation of external factors in the learning environment at any one time that may affect the learning capabilities of the group.

An instantaneous assessment and then pragmatic response to spontaneous events arising during the lesson.

An assessment of the value of 'red herrings'. Some may be helpful in the short or long term, others counterproductive to the learning objectives of the lesson.

A knowledge of the pupil's relationships with each other and other factors which may inhibit or encourage responses during the lesson.

My ego.

I 'switch pupils on and off' depending on whether they are contributing either positive or negative factors to the lesson. Another extract from Susan Gibbs.

Mike is conscious of whether the students are on task or off task and tends to 'switch them off' before behaviour becomes too disruptive. For example, Ollie and Tom are talking and a clear word directed at them brings them back onto task quickly and almost unobtrusively. He has an awareness of where each student is at in terms of their learning and will bring them back onto task often simply by looking at the individual, changing his tone of voice or saying their name.

I use exaggerated and dramatic hand and body gestures to make teaching points.

I move around the classroom constantly.

I am constantly monitoring both group responses and individual responses against my lesson plan and learning objectives.

I remain calm and empathetic even though I may be less so internally.

I choose my words and vocabulary carefully and try to make them appropriate to the group I am teaching.

I make mistakes both in my choice of words and sometimes in the choice of pupils to help me with oral contributions to the lesson.

I am able to organise my thoughts back on task quickly after distractions like external interruptions to the lesson.

I convey my displeasure of disruptive actions both verbally and non verbally.

I seize opportunities to have 1:1 discussions with pupils if they are engaged on tasks that allow me to do so.

I enjoy humour in lessons.

I use a great deal of energy in lessons both physical and emotional.

I am interested in the contributions from the pupils that contribute to the flow of the lesson if I think they will enhance the learning process.

If I cultivate the momentum that I would like in the lessons, the group in the end becomes self-driving, which then drives me to even greater heights. An enigma in this analysis is that the group ends up subconsciously managing me.

I expect high standards of work from the pupils. An extract from pupil voices in **Appendix 5.**

Andrew S

Personality – Organised, sense of humour, firm but friendly, responsible, an optimist.

Teaching style – Explains well, quite strict, makes sure we get notes and understand them, seems to enjoy the subject, and teaching it, High expectations and rightly so. Positive attitude.

I give time and energy to those who need or ask for it both in and out of lesson time.

I use my family as examples to illustrate points. This is a conscious decision on my behalf in order to illustrate to the pupils that (a) I am human, and (b) that I am at the same level of understanding as they are.

I have empathy for the middle ability pupils or slower learners in my groups.

I am always looking for opportunities to reinforce or review previous subject facts.

I work in slow steps from the known to the unknown in a thorough methodical way.

I constantly respond to audio and visual cues from the pupils to help to make connections between different parts of the subject.

I use active pupil learning wherever possible although I do tend to be teacher orientated in many of my lessons.

I remain in control of and manage the learning process for my groups.

Body posture and the creation of a teaching persona is important to me, and I constantly seize the opportunity to reaffirm that I am the leader in this learning process.

These then are the factors that I have learnt about my teaching style and myself. In addition, I must reflect and analyse the overall learning that I have achieved throughout my life, both personally and as a developing teacher. If I am to express my teaching theory, I must register those factors that have and are influencing my decision-making processes. The relevance of this is that I am using these learning experiences as the building blocks from which I launch my stance to help my colleagues in their own quest to raise the achievement levels of their pupils.

I have undertaken this process by analysing the text of this thesis and highlighting the words phrases and sentences where I have indicated to myself that my learning has taken place. In Chapter 9, the final chapter, I propose to draw the threads of this multifaceted journey through time and space together. I will draw on the views of others and on reflections by myself in order to create my living educational theory. I will also engage with the relevant literature to contextualise this thesis in the educational academy and comment on the value of the research to me and to the world of education.

Chapter 9 - The Circle Is Completed.

This final chapter completes the wheel of action, and firmly places School Effectiveness and School Improvement together as one process. It pulls together the threads of development that have been running through the thesis and completes most of the various journeys that I embarked upon. The ones left uncompleted are those journeys that are time related and have not yet by nature of their action come naturally to their end. The chapter starts by posing questions that are central to the framework of the thesis and which firmly place the thesis in the educational research context and then moves on reflecting upon the personal learning journey that I have undertaken. Following this I tentatively gaze into the field of education for the future. The explication of my own living educational theory as a way of describing and telling the story of an educator and Professional Development Manager at work, in one school as it embarks on a whole school improvement process, is drawn to a conclusion.

This chapter is proving really difficult for me to write. I have agonised and procrastinated for months, avoiding the issue. My supervisors have made helpful suggestions and I have read a number of other researcher's Ph.D submissions and it seems even more difficult now than ever. What finally stung me into action was a critique from Jack at my last tutorial with him. I had smugly put together what I thought was a good draft of my thesis. I acknowledge that it was not at submission stage, but it was moving towards that possibility. Then the goal posts moved. I always suspected that they would, but it was still difficult when the moment came. By that I mean that the full rigour of Jack Whitehead's critique came to bear. I have always enjoyed, respected and welcomed the comments from my supervisors about my work and it was the realisation that I was not where I thought I was, that has goaded me into action. Let me quote the section from Jack's notes that provoked this final response:

This represents an impressive effort and the thesis is beginning to take shape. In judging the work as a whole, I'd say that the quality was clearly of M.Phil level and that the thesis was now clearly located within a distinctive research literature. These are very positive features of the work. The task, as I see it, is to work on the draft so that it is clearly Mike's original contribution to the field. The differences as I see them, between an M.Phil and a Ph.D is that the Ph.D has to be an original contribution to knowledge. It cannot remain as a technical piece of work, which make a contribution to knowledge by drawing on theories and explanations of others. There must be a critical engagement with the theories of others and an original contribution within the thesis itself.

(Whitehead 16.11.98)

This is fair, true, realistic and a clear guide to me as to where I need to go next. My emotions combined disappointment, understanding and a little anger. Why? I don't know, perhaps it's the disappointment at not being where I had hoped. The important result however is it has generated in me, just what Jack said the thesis was missing up to this point, passion and anger and an exposition of the original contribution I have made in this thesis to the educational knowledge base.

What I intend to do is to engage in a two sided conversation in much the same way as Jean McNiff (1989) did, and for the same reason. That is, I am working on my own away from the cut and thrust of 'academic conversation' that Eames (1995) enjoyed. I have no circle of academic friends with whom I meet regularly to try out my theories and ideas. This is not a jaundiced or indeed self-pitying plea of helplessness. The Action Research Group at Bath University meets regularly and I have been constantly invited to attend and present papers which I have done on occasions; it is more of a pragmatic operational standpoint. Bath is fifty miles from my home, and this represents considerable travel time. As time is of the essence as a part time student with a full time job, I made the decision to involve myself in my research rather than devote the time travelling to Bath. I also do not have the luxury of a close colleague with whom I can easily exchange text and expect constructive criticism and dialogue like Eames (1995) had with D'Arcy (1998).

I propose to ask questions, play Devil's Advocate, and respond as myself. During this interplay I hope that the outcome of my Action Research Cycles will become evident, that my personal learning becomes obvious, the originality of my work established and my role as the Professional Development Manager and educator in the school clarified. The questions I am asking are to bring the reader's attention to my personal development, personality traits and values and how they impact on my professional life and work. I also wish to bring the reader's attention to my role and involvement as the Professional Development Manager in the school. Following on from this dialogue I will summarise the processes undertaken in this research, the conclusions I have come to and finally look forward to the future.

What questions should I ask?

The questions evolved as I undertook the thesis and were refined as the research progressed. They seem to be important questions for me to answer for myself so that I can

articulate my living educational theory. In addition I hope they make the process and outcomes of the research clearer for the reader.

1. What is original about my work, and what have I learnt?
2. Have I helped others to develop in my role as a teacher and Professional Development Manager?
3. What proof is there, that anything the school or I have done has brought about improvement?
4. Where do the Action Research Cycles take the school and me?
5. What role did I play in the whole school improvement process and how has the contribution I have made added to the field of academic educational research?
6. Is any of the work that I have undertaken transferable and useful to other teachers in my school and to schools in general?
7. Have I changed as a person and as a teacher-researcher and if I have what are the benefits of those changes?
8. What has the work achieved?

The answers to these questions will be distilled from the text of the preceding chapters.

Question 1 What is original about my work and what have I learnt?

Several researchers have undertaken research of the kind 'How can I improve.....? If this is the case, what is original about my learning and my educational theory, and what have I learnt? If the justification for the approach is accepted, then what makes this thesis original and different from others? To fully answer this question, the framework within which the thesis is written needs considerable explanation. The thesis is unique because I bring to the reader's attention, several forms of representation of teacher knowledge. I do this in the form of a synthesis of two ancient Logics into one '*singularity*' (Bassey 1995), the study of me as an individual educator involved in a whole school improvement process. The two forms of Logic are the propositional and dialectical forms.

I manage to hold many activities together, discuss, argue, negotiate and analyse them into a single whole that is the art of the dialectician. At other points in the thesis, I undertake a different analytical format where I create lists of personal value and attribute these values to my pedagogy of teaching, the propositional form of logic. This produces a living contradiction of 'Logicality'. There is a tension in the presentation of the research in as much as the logic of the two forms does not necessarily sit comfortably together. What makes my thesis unique is the success with which I achieve this process and bring about a

synthesis that in turn makes 'Logical' sense. This contradiction is my ability to create the lists and carry out analysis while at the same time engaging in a dialectical dialogue. The outcome the initiatives outlined in Chapter 6 and 7 are the result of collaboration between my colleagues and myself. This synthesis of approach is the contradiction.

Historically there has always been a tension between the Theories and Logics of the ancient philosophers Aristotle and Plato. This 2000-year-old battle has substance in the differing forms in which these two philosophers attempt to explain the world. Plato (1931) expounded his theory in a document called the Phaedrus. Socrates speaking through Plato propounded that the art of the dialectician is ***'to hold one and the many together'***.

Dialectics is the process of *'getting to know'* through question and answer. Socrates was interested in *'the dialogues of poetic inspiration'* and from these works came the concept of *'getting to know'* by analysis. The analysis that takes place in my thesis is by breaking the component parts down into *'several particulars'*. I do this in the thesis where I undertake the analysis of several initiatives being undertaken at the same time and keep an overview of where they fit into each other. At the same time I seek to achieve the concept of overall unity to make sense of the system in operation as a whole. The Socratic form of 'Dialectics' is a process of explanation whereby change and development is brought about as a result of dialogue between two people. During this dialogue questions are posed and answered, contradiction occurs and tensions develop. The strength of this form of logic is the struggle that ensues as the action of resolution of these tensions occurs. This is a crude representation of fact however. Ilyenkov (1977: 6) defines dialectical knowledge:

Our 'object' or 'subject matter' in general, and on the whole, is thought, thinking; and dialectical Logic has as its aim the development of a scientific representation of thought in those necessary moments, and moreover in the necessary sequence, that do not in the least depend either on our will or on our consciousness.

Ilyenkov (1977: 6) goes on to define Logic:

Logic must show how thought develops if it is scientific, if it reflects, i.e. reproduces in concepts, and object existing outside our consciousness and will and independently of them, in other words, creates a mental reproduction of it, reconstructs its self-development, recreates it in the logic of the movement of concepts so as to recreate it later in fact. Logic then is the theoretical representation of such thinking.

Philosophers like Kant, Hegel and Marx created their own sense of dialectics and Hegel in particular was a strong proponent of the form. He is often quoted as the originator of the traditional dialectical triad of thesis, antithesis and synthesis; i.e. form an idea, create the

opposite and then bring the two together to move on to a higher thesis. Hegel (1931) formed a powerful and influential '*Phenomenology of Spirit*', which produced almost totalitarian views that it created unity in the imagination. He had what he called the '*absolute ego*' and he strived to get acceptance of his ideas of dialectics as being a method of thought that included the process of '*elucidating contradictions and concretely resolving them*', (In Ilyenkov 1977:190). Marx took this idea further but attempted to construe the logic from a different point of view. He wanted to concretise the concept. Ilyenkov (1977:9) continues with the thought that:

The concretisation of the general definition of Logic presented above must obviously consist in disclosing the concepts composing it, above all the concept of thought (thinking). Here again a purely dialectical difficulty arises, namely, that to define this concept fully, i.e. concretely, also means to 'write' Logic, because a full description cannot by any means be given by a 'definition' but only by 'developing the essence of the matter'.

The propositional form of logic is equally old, and in easy to understand terms, it is that of a proposal. I have the ability to make a statement about a subject because I have some evidence to support it. The philosopher Aristotle went on within the concept of propositional logic to create the law of contradiction. This states that '*You cannot have two mutually exclusive statements that are true simultaneously*'. The concept of propositional logic is endemic in western research culture and academic tradition. For many years, research has almost totally been concerned with one form of logic, the 'Aristotelian Logic' of proposition. Aristotle battled with the philosopher Plato because Aristotle tried to eliminate contradiction from correct thought. In his work '*On interpretation*' (1952), Aristotle wrote of the necessity of choosing whether a person has a characteristic or not. Whitehead (1999:1) comments '*Plato appears to embrace contradiction, Aristotle to explicitly eliminate contradictions from correct thought*'. It was '*whether you have a characteristic or not which led to the law of contradiction*'. Whitehead (1999: 1) takes the historical overview further:

In the 1960s, these conflicts could be clearly seen between Popper's (1963) view that dialectical theories were based on nothing better than a loose and woolly way of speaking and that theories which contained contradiction were entirely useless as theories. He justifies this claim using the laws of inference. Marcuse (1964) on the other hand, claimed that propositional theories, by eliminating contradictions, were masking the dialectical nature of reality.

This tension has existed for over 2000 years and Whitehead notes that Ilyenkov (1977) continues the conundrum by posing yet another twist to the argument in the final chapter of his book by asking '*If an object exists as a living contradiction, what must the thought be*

that expresses it?' (Whitehead (1999:1). I can attempt to answer this as I restate that I am a living contradiction showing dialogical and dialectical form where I address myself as I engage with myself in the practical problems of raising achievement. I have engaged the reader and myself in the processes of School Improvement, School Effectiveness and Action Research and moved the reader through a process where I have authentically shown all the different forms of activity that I am embracing as part of that synergy. To that end, the propositional form of logic is embraced within the process of the enquiry itself and the process of my own learning.

Another unique part of my thesis is the proposition that I bring the two Logics together through an exposition of my personal qualities as an educator. The work of Wilson and Wilson (1998:355) point out the importance of this hitherto neglected area of educational research. They argue that *'effective learning depends primarily on the personal qualities of the educator'*. I have to accept that this is not all the story, that there are other factors that also contribute to the process of learning such as the learning environment, the quality of support that children get from home and the 'art' of the teacher. A teacher's personal qualities do have a significant effect on learning. During Chapter 2 and Chapter 8 I have shown how my own values and standards affect my teaching methodology and this validated evidence is supported both by the students I teach and the researcher Susan Gibbs. Wilson and Wilson (1998:359) go on to support my thesis with a very basic observational statement. That is, to be an effective teacher one must parallel the attributes of the good parent:

Parents are not good educators because they have mastered some theory or set of techniques, but – centrally and primarily, at least – because of what they are. If they genuinely love their children, do not abuse them, exercise a reasonably firm but kind discipline over them, share their lives and pastimes with them, give them encouragement but also correction, and so on, then the children learn well.

I try throughout my professional work to exemplify those parental values. It is not just with the pupils however; it also pertains to my actions with my colleagues, as it seems to me to be a basic tenet of the educative process. This outlook displayed throughout my thesis is the basis of my actions.

The final unique component of my thesis is the way in which I have used insights from the fields of School Effectiveness, School Improvement and the paradigm of Action Research to show the particular improvement focus at St John's and how my learning has impacted upon and aided that improvement process. Nias (1989), Little (1990) and Rosenholtz

(1985) have all argued for collaboration and research in the classroom as part of the school improvement. Little in particular, talks of '*joint work*' where paired teaching can take place and where Action Research can bring about the collaboration necessary to provide a base for substantial improvement in pupil progress. The Alan Shelton vignette, Vignette 1 is an example of this collaboration. What is missing from research literature is a substantial and close study of a school in action undertaking improvement activities. This thesis offers these components within the larger study of the school at the centre of the change process. In addition, the thesis undertakes analysis at classroom level. When such activities are encouraged and enabled to take place then practice improves. Hopkins *et al* (1994:52) argue that:

Teachers in successful schools take individual and collective responsibility for basing their teaching on the best knowledge and practice available. But they then take those ideas and strategies and critically reflect on them through practice in their own and each other's classrooms.

This is the sort of activity and attitude that is displayed in this thesis. There is research done in a combination of the fields, and I have used this as a vehicle to try and understand and explicate my learning during the process. The strength of this research lies with the freedom to use the research in School Effectiveness and School Improvement to support my action as a teacher in the school investigating and explaining my own practice. The Action Research component enables me to undertake those actions on site and then correlate the data with the activities such as the IQEA projects mentioned in Chapters 5, 6 and **Appendix 1**.

To summarise the answer to my question of originality, what I have created is a relationship between the form of the presentation and the narrative. I have used two forms of Logic simultaneously to explain my life as a professional educator, showing my professional learning as part of this simultaneous representation. The uniqueness of the thesis is the fact that I am holding these two Logics together in the description. I am holding the 'one and the many' together. The individual singularity, me, is enquiring into my own learning while also holding a series of other research enquiries together. I have used the art of the dialectician as I have moved through the thesis using it as a form of insight into my work as a professional educator. I have also shown how I have been helping teachers to improve the quality of the learning for the pupils. I have done this by engaging with the School Improvement and School Effectiveness work, integrating that work into my practice and actions. Examples of my action can be seen in my intervention with the mentoring initiatives, giving both the teachers and the pupils new opportunities

and insights by building on data from my research. Also by my actions with the self-esteem initiative where the identification of pupils with low self-esteem has helped Form Tutors give extra targeted help to those pupils. Another example is the way in which I have used pupils and their voices to guide teachers to those learning strategies that the pupils find are the most effective for their learning. I now move from this point in my dialectical conversation with myself, to pose the next part of question.

What have I learnt?

This is a difficult question to answer. What is learning and when does it start and stop? Have I learnt from the process of my research and writing this Ph.D? As with most aspects of life there are more questions than answers, but not to grasp the nettle would be to admit failure. Wilson and Wilson (1998:356) define learning within the context of education.

They say:

Whatever else education implies, at least it implies some kind of learning, which in turn (when we consider what 'learn' means) involves a connection with knowledge and truth and rationality.

To define learning then, I turn to the Concise Oxford Dictionary, (Sykes,1987:571). '*Get knowledge of, or skill in, or ability to do, by study, experience or being taught*'. This is not by any means the only definition, but does serve to support the processes involved in my research. The two quotations contextualise and define the process I have undertaken. What I have learnt comes through the text in all chapters and in a variety of different ways. If we further define the process by indicating that a permanent change takes place as part of the learning process then I have been permanently changed. The act of writing this thesis has for me been an educational process in itself. While I have engaged in educational research before, this has been on a different scale. I have learnt the excitement of being able to carry out a substantial piece of academic work to the satisfaction of my supervisors. I have learnt the mechanical processes involved in writing narrative, in the skills of literature research, of argument, of synthesis, of comparison and of compromise. The skills of negotiation, of time management, of data collection and organisation are all evident. I have learnt the way Ph.D.s are developed over time, that emphasis and focus can change, for example the way in which my question changed and is continuing to do so. I have learnt the skills of listening and understanding when meeting with my supervisors. I have learnt to understand the true position that I am in, as a researcher. It took several years to understand that the relationship between my supervisors and myself was not actually teacher and pupil, but at the least, educational thinkers at different points on the same road.

I have learnt the pleasure of release from the millstone of low educational self-esteem I have carried for 40 years. To use the words of a friend, an alternative title for my work at a personal level could be *'from millstone to milestone'*. The pleasure of a freedom to write on a subject that is of real worth and value to me, and one that I would like to share with others. I have realised that I have a drive to share my learning with the academy and I recognise the importance of my research to future generations of teachers and pupils.

On a personal level, I have learnt about myself. While I have had a personal perception of my personality and of whom I think I am, I have had the opportunity through this thesis to actually learn how others see me. The validation by my pupils, by the Headteacher and by the independent researcher from Bath has enabled me to see myself from the outside. I have learnt how I teach, make educational decisions and manage the pupils in my care. I have learnt the true relationship between my teaching and my values and standards and how I interact with colleagues and pupils in my professional capacity. I would like to explore this aspect of my learning in greater depth. One of the important lessons for any effective teacher to learn is described in anecdotal form by Wisdom (1965: 360) on learning:

It is I believe, extremely difficult to breed lions. But there was at one time at the Dublin Zoo a keeper by the name of Mr Flood who bred many lion cubs without losing one. Asked the secret of his success, Mr Flood replied 'understanding lions'. Asked what consists the understanding of lions, he replied 'Every lion is different'.

The parallel is of course an important educational one. Every child is different and therefore requires a slightly different teaching and learning process. The initiative to look at self-esteem and the Year 10 and 11 mentoring processes in Chapter 7, the individual pupil responses in Chapter 2 and the work with Alan Shelton in Chapter 6 are all indicative of the importance of the need for the teacher to give an individual response.

My learning is even more fundamental than this in relation to the teaching and learning process. I have learnt that teachers must have, if they are to be effective, attributes like a sense of humour, sane approach to discipline, insight, enthusiasm for the subject and conceptual clarity.

A significant learning event for me is a small but important point that I will emphasise again here, that is the importance of working with my colleagues and students in the research process. The accent is on the working and researching 'with' rather than

researching 'on' them. The 'on' implies a distance from the research material. This is not the way I have been working. I have been very much in collaboration with all my students and colleagues; my thesis being that of a teacher in a school going about everyday practice.

The learning has been a very personal and sometimes painful but enlightening experience. It has confirmed to me my values and standards as an individual, a teacher, as a researcher and finally as a Professional Development Manager. During this process I have had to let '*objective others*' make judgements about my learning and professional practice.

Having answered the first question, my questions then start to merge as I answer them because they are interrelated. The process of learning, of personally changing and the benefits that have accrued from such a process are explored below.

Question 2 - Have I helped others to develop?

One of the significant moments in my educational career happened to me in 1998. A pupil came to me to ask if I would help him with some concepts of Biology that he was having difficulty with. Not remarkable on its own as an occurrence, but made so for me because he went on to say that he liked my style of teaching. He liked the way I used images and everyday things to help people like him understand the Biological concepts. He had sought my help because he identified with that style of teaching. The event is significant for me because that is exactly the process I am trying to undertake as the Professional Development Manager with the staff. I am trying to enthral, excite and motivate them using my values, standards and professional training in such a way that they feel success, and cascade that feeling through to other staff. The realisation that I have given to Alan Shelton a confidence from which he now feels empowered to help other teachers is the real mark of success for me. I was flattered that the pupil came to me, and flattered that Alan Shelton made similar supportive comments. It is now up to me to try and cascade that same feeling throughout the staff and engender reciprocal learning and teaching from my other colleagues who are equally as competent as I am. If I can engender a staff where sharing of ideas, expertise and support are the order of the day then I will feel fulfilled as an educator.

There are a number of tangible occasions where I have helped staff to develop personally, perhaps the most obvious example being that of Alan Shelton. In the final analysis of Chapter 6, I engaged in a second interview with Alan after a year had elapsed since the original work on the vignette. During that interview, Alan expressed his increased

confidence, self-esteem and knowledge, and explained how this had enabled him in turn to help other colleagues, particularly new and younger members of staff who were finding their teaching life difficult, with their own development. This knowledge gives me great satisfaction.

Another colleague achieved promotion during the research period. The achievement of a Deputy Headship in another school for a colleague as a direct consequence of your actions is intensely satisfying. The following memo to me supports that process:

To: MAB From: EXB
Date: 21.10.98 Subject: Staff Development.

Many thanks for your help with my personal development and the development of the department over the years. I particularly remember your advice / help / guidance in getting raising achievement onto the school agenda – knowing what was going on in the wider world was especially useful. I also remember our conversations about lesson observation – which led me directly to an appropriate course and the introduction of a system of lesson observation within the department. You can be assured that that will be a priority in my new job. The current piece of Action Research by the department – ‘setting’ year 10 by gender and motivation owes a lot to you – pointing out whom to talk to etc.

Many thanks,

Eric.

This memo is another example of my successful interaction with a colleague. I had been working with Eric as he engaged with the NPQH qualification and an Ed.D degree to support him as he moved up the career ladder. After a series of meetings where Eric adopted suggestions I made, he was promoted to his new post and I feel that I had an integral part of that promotion.

It is difficult to measure all of the effect that I may have had with my teaching and non-teaching colleagues. All I can do is cite specific instances like those above, and show that during my work in the school I have come into contact with a variety of different groups of both adults and students with whom I have had dialogue and with whom I have interacted. I hope that as a result of those interactions I have had some effect on their personal development either as practitioners or as students. Such groups include the NQTs, non-teaching support staff, premises management, personnel, administrators, M.D.S.As, L.S.As and the Librarians. The new Year 11 mentors, and finally the Novice Teachers from Bath University who have been involved with me in their own Action Research Projects as part

of their course. The discussions on research methodology have been made richer from my own research experiences as I undertake this Ph.D. I have also been involved with a group of more senior staff who are looking for promotion and with whom I am engaged in assisting them with qualifications like NPQH. This requires them to undertake Action Research projects and again I am using my experience and knowledge to help them. Finally those colleagues both teaching and non-teaching who are themselves engaged in research. The Action Research Group has given me the basis for dialogue with those colleagues at a high academic level and I have contributed to their methodology, question formation, literature research and supported them in times of stress. It's good to share when the pressures of life seem to be adding to the pressures of the research, and to have someone in school that both understands the pressures of part time research and can be supportive is of great benefit.

Question 3 - What proof is there, that anything the school or I have done has brought about improvement?

This is one of the more difficult questions to answer. I stated at the start of this chapter that there were no answers yet to some questions, and this is one of them. One of the reasons for this is that some of the improvement initiatives are still in process. While monitoring is taking place, the hard indicators of success are still some years away. The Literacy and Spelling policy is successfully in place and the quality and effectiveness of it was commented on by the OFSTED inspection of 2000. All we can say at this time is that they are '*en train*' and seem to be operating at an appropriate level. As part of the Action Research process, and the good practice of School Improvement methodology, mid point evaluations have and are taking place. The school has 'process targets' in place to assist in the realisation of school targets set as a government requirement. These process targets not only help in the achievement of the hard targets measured by external examination success, they will also serve as evaluative mechanisms during the process. The pointers from these mid-point ongoing evaluative processes lead the school to believe that there will be an improvement in performance. The external examination results of 1999 and 2000 at KS3, GCSE and 'A' level all surpassed the internal targets set by the school. Significantly, the school created a new post in 2000 of Director for Base Line Data to manage and utilise to the full the target setting process. The creation of this post is the start of another action cycle and a measure of how successful and useful the school recognises the process to be. In **Appendix 9**, I outline the hard indicators of success as measured by external examination success for those initiatives that have come to full term. By those measures,

clearly the school is doing something right because there has been a significant improvement in the five years during which the research has been undertaken. The increase in the number of pupils achieving grades A – C at GCSE and the number of A* achievements has gone up over that time. The success of the new mathematics scheme outlined in Chapters 4 and **Appendix 10** also supports the success of the raising achievement initiative in Mathematics. There is now a greater emphasis on teaching and learning at Directorate level. New processes are in place and are recorded in the School Improvement Plan (the St John's term for school Development Plan) and the school's Strategic Plan. The Staff Development Days are focussed on the processes of teaching and learning and with increased confidence and expertise, staff regularly lead these days. We are in a process of celebrating that expertise and feeling positive about it. There is a greater accessibility to classrooms with an open invitation to all staff to visit if they wish. It is difficult to measure from that success, exactly what part could be directly attributed to myself. All that can be said is that I, as part of a team of teachers, and as the Professional Development Manager have collectively brought about some measurable changes for the better in the school. These could be attributed to the School Improvement and School Effectiveness initiatives the school has been engaged with over the last five years.

As part of the answer to this question, I refer now to the work of Winter (1989). He put forward the concept of *'improvisatory self realisation'*. The concept that the structure of this thesis, a school initiative, or the development of a school improvement plan is a living, growing, organic structure. There is no direct causal relationship between all the strategies or initiatives being developed by the school, or indeed any linear relationship. As a consequence it is quite correct that some of the initiatives have reached fruition and can be evaluated. Some are at mid-point in their development and some have failed and do not appear any longer as a source of information. The results in **Appendix 9** and my comments earlier, support this concept as a statement of the reality as it is in my school.

I am now going on to the subset question of 'is this just a study of valediction for the school and me'? *'All that glitters is not gold'* (Shakespeare-Hamlet) as the saying goes. So it is with the school improvement initiatives that are and have taken place in the school. This thesis is certainly not a valediction of success. Indeed some of the initiatives that have been undertaken have 'withered on the vine'. The working party for Raising Achievement was successful for the best part of two years but has now ceased to exist. EXB's initiative for the management of behaviour, never really got off the ground. The School Numeracy

Policy whilst in place is proving really difficult to sustain. It is now in need of radical change before it can be pushed forward again and renewed focus will be undertaken in 2002 as part of a Government initiative.

On a personal level, I cannot claim to have successfully managed all my colleagues. Indeed some I have mismanaged, and some I have had little effect on. What I can say is that I have had some success to celebrate, and I have learnt by my mistakes. The school is, as I suggest, a living organic organisation, it is a reality for there to be some failure, but success comes from that failure. If the learning environment and the will of the personnel are appropriate, then failure is just another part of the Action Research cycle. The results are produced, analysed, evaluated and in the case of failure the reasons for the failure identified. The important part is that the school and the people in it then move on to address that failure and create new and better. My own learning of this process is important to recognise here. I have to question why I did not achieve success with all of my colleagues. It would be too easy to write the failure off as the attitude of immovable or intractable 'others'. The question is could or will I be more successful next time? I can only suggest that I reflect on these attitudes and the deep-seated intransigence behind them and work on a set of different approaches to these people. This is easily said and difficult to achieve, but both realistic and necessary if the school and the staff in it are to move positively. My next question has been partly answered already.

Question 4 - Where do the action research cycles take the school and me?

This is perhaps the most straightforward question of all to answer. Chapter 4 gave a clear indication of the various cycles that were taking place both in the school environment and in my own development. The importance of the paradigm cannot be overstated, and the increasing number of researchers identified in various parts of this thesis testifies to the efficacy of the process. The Action Research process best answers the simple question of 'How can I improve what I am doing?' Whitehead (1989) is very clear in his enthusiasm for this approach as being an effective and efficient means of answering the question. The justification for the process was examined in depth in Chapter 3. The question is where does it take the school and me. If one accepts that the process of the cycle is – plan, act, review, evaluate, change and move forward, then that is exactly what both the school and myself have done. The school is a different place to what it was in 1995 when data collection for this thesis started. Using the Leitch and Day (2000) '*practical Action Research*' model has enabled the school to move forward not only in terms of improved

pupil performance, but also in the way in which it approaches many aspects of its day-to-day work. Leitch and Day (2000:183) make the point that:

Practical Action Research aims to improve practice through the application of practical judgement and the accumulated personal wisdom of the teacher. Models of Action Research falling within this frame are as concerned with process as the end product of the inquiry. They rely not only on the exercise of moral and practical judgement by teachers, but also their capacities to identify issues or problems that are salient to this in these professional contexts.

As this process has been applied to the Action Research process, the spiral of improvement has occurred and been documented in Chapters 4, 6 and 7. The added value of the teacher's experience, judgements and the identification of '*salient problems*' and their resolution has been a feature of this research. The synergy of School Improvement and School Effectiveness fields has been explored in depth and the effectiveness of the outcomes that emerge are a positive success story.

For me as a researcher, the completion of this thesis is the end of an Action Research cycle. My learning of how to undertake high quality academic research, and all the skills associated with the process has been achieved. I am now better prepared for the next stage of my academic career, as the research cycle will almost inevitably start again.

As a person, the cycle concerned with my teaching has moved as a result of my new understanding of the information about myself and how others see me. I can go with confidence into areas that I have been uneasy about approaching before because I am more certain of my ground.

My work as the Professional Development Manager has also moved as noted by Patrick Hazlewood in this chapter when I answer question 6. I am operating at a different level to that which I started at four years ago, and this change is a result of the Action Research process in operation. The next question has a wider educational application.

Question 5 - What role did I play in the whole school improvement process as a teacher and Professional Development Manager and have I added to the field of academic research?

Let me contextualise this question by quoting Lomax (1999: 2). She is making the argument that the teaching profession needs to move forward from being an acceptor to that of a proactive giver, and I feel that is just what I have been engaged in at St. John's.

The notion of service that underpins the classical model is still appropriate today. However, the teacher of the classical model was a neutral figure, mediating between dictates of a professional code and individual needs. Today, we recognise the need for a more proactive figure. For example, a strong case can be made in many contexts for positive discrimination rather than impartiality. The idea of teachers' continuing professional development is underpinned by an imperative to improve practice, although the notion that teachers should have a say in changing the system is more controversial.

Rosenholtz (1989) created the notion of the 'moving school' where the prominent characteristic is a developing culture of sustained quality teaching. This is supported by her (Rozenholtz's 1985) idea that teachers should not be isolated but encouraged to share dialogue and collaborate in development. Collaboration is the watchword of Nias (1989) and Little (1990) whose work pointed to the effectiveness of Action Research in the classroom and shared teacher activity bringing about significant progress for pupils. With this research in mind, my role as both teacher and Professional Development Manager has been clear. I had a mandate to communicate and work with all the staff to reinforce the concept of staff development in order to bring about improvement in children's learning.

I have accepted the challenge of being the person I am. My personal qualities have been described in Chapter 2, my role described in many places, my influence described in Chapters 4, 6, 7, 8 and 9 and my role validated by the Headteacher in question 6. Let me reiterate and re-emphasise the statements I made earlier. During the period of the thesis I have personally grown both intellectually and managerially and increased my learning. Much of this thesis is about this learning and growth and the effect this has had on others. To summarise, I have achieved the following:

- I had a vision of where I am going and what I want and need to do for and with my colleagues, in order to bring about improvement of both themselves and the pupils.
- I have brought those personal qualities, beliefs, standards and values outlined in Chapter 2 to bear on, and in my work, in a way that has had a positive effect on all of those around me.
- I have worked with colleagues and pupils in a collaborative manner in the school improvement process. Caldwell and Spinks (1988), Little (1990), Nias (1989), Stoll (1999) and Hopkins (2001) all emphasise the value of a collaborative culture as being the most likely culture to bring about improvement.
- I am an effective model as a teacher and a Professional Development Manager. Susan Gibbs validates this, in this chapter and the pupils' voices in Chapter 2 also confirm this.

- I have a notion of Professional Development that I have been keen to share with all my colleagues, in an effort to improve activity and performance in the school.
- I have become a competent teacher-researcher and been able, in my role, to pass some of this learning onto others.
- I have helped to create a school with an '*internal capacity for change*', (Stoll, 1999).

I have been totally immersed in the School Improvement process for the last five years, and in my role as Professional Development Manager for the last four. During that period of time it would be impossible to illustrate all the occasions where my influence has been felt. The most productive record of my involvement is recorded in the diary of events as they unfolded during the research period as described in Chapter 4 and the record of my involvement in the initiatives described in Chapters 4, 6 and 7. I feel that it has been substantial and continuous.

The change process

Having focussed for a short time on the effect that I had on the institution, it would be remiss of me not to note the ability of the institution to both react to me and with me in the improvement process. It must be acknowledged here that the school changed over the period of the research. I think it is important that I engage for a short time in a conversation about the process of change.

At the start of the research period, the school had been stable and successful for a considerable period of time. Examination results as seen in **Appendix 9** were reasonable for the type of school it is, and requests for admission from out of catchment area children remained at a high level. (Often used as a marker of success and popularity by other parents). The OFSTED (1996) report that triggered this thesis then altered the status quo. We as an institution could no longer afford to remain as we were. We had to change our practice, learning environment, expectations and outlook if we were to deliver a better service to our pupils. In order to make these changes, a more fundamental shift also had to be achieved. We had to build into the school the capacity to change. Change is a threatening activity for most people and most institutions. When the status quo is altered, personal effectiveness challenged, power bases moved and redistributed and embedded practice altered, it is not surprising that organisations go through an unsettled period. Joyce and Showers (1988) note that generally things get worse before they get better in what is termed the '*implementation dip*'. Such a 'dip' was noted in many of the initiatives the school started during the research period, and could be one explanation for the

Headteacher's concerns in note 51 and 52 of the conversation in **Appendix 16**. Change has been studied in great depth by many researchers, two of them, Miles (1986) and Fullan (1991) have made the important statement that change is not a linear process. This is brought out in the study of the school's initiatives and the stop start, up and down progress of many of the initiatives is evidence of that. Fullan and Miles both agree that there are basically three overlapping phases to change, initiation, implementation and finally institutionalisation. Miles (1986) goes on to summarise in his view the factors that make for a successful innovation cited in Hopkins (2001:39):

- *an innovation tied to a local agenda and high profile need;*
- *a clear well structured approach to change;*
- *an active advocate or champion who understands the innovation and supports it;*
- *an active initiation to start the innovation (top down is all right under certain conditions);*
- *good quality innovation.*

These factors have all been seen and evidenced in the school's initiatives, and it can be recognised that when some of the components are missing, the initiative either failed or was less successful. But how has the school managed to get to this point of change acceptance?

Coping with change and the leadership of it is summarised well by Schön (1983: 2) who says:

In the varied topography of professional practice, there is a high ground overlooking the swamp. On the high ground, manageable problems lend themselves to solutions through the application of research-based theory and technique. In the swampy lowland, messy, confusing problems defy technical solutions.

Managing is a relatively easy activity when the conditions are stable, in a period of uncertainty like change, then it becomes more problematic. How then did the school manage to create an environment that would be receptive to the concept and culture of change? It followed a strategy that Hopkins (2001:70) now refers to as a 'third age' approach to improvement. These management processes put St John's ahead of the current research as we have been practicing these change processes for some years. These approaches are:

- *There is an enhanced focus upon the importance of pupil outcomes. Instead of the earlier emphasis upon changing the processes of schools, the focus is now upon seeing if these changes are powerful enough to affect pupil outcomes.*
- *The learning level and the instructional behaviours of teachers are increasingly being targeted for explicit attention as well as the school level. Specifications of curriculum and teaching are being adopted that extend current practice and that focus directly on the student learning goals that have been set.*

- *There is the creation of an infrastructure to enable the knowledge base, both 'best practice' and research findings, to be utilised. This involves an internal focus on collaborative patterns of staff development that enable teachers to enquire into practice, and external strategies for dissemination and networking.*
- *In addition there is an increasing consciousness of the importance of 'capacity building'. This includes not only staff development, but also medium-term strategic planning, change strategies that utilise 'pressure and support', as well as the intelligent use of external support agencies.*
- *The adoption of a 'mixed' methodological orientation, in which bodies of quantitative data plus qualitative data are used to measure quality, effects and deficiencies, is becoming more common. This includes an audit of existing classroom and school processes and outcomes, and comparison with desired end states, in particular the educational experiences of different pupil groups.*
- *Authentic school improvement stresses the importance of ensuring reliability or 'fidelity' in the programme implementation across all the organisational members within schools, a marked contrast with the past when improvement programmes did not have to be organisationally 'tight'.*
- *There is an appreciation of the importance of cultural change in order to embed and sustain this approach to school improvement. There is a careful balance between 'vision building' and the adapting of structures to support those aspirations.*

The management team having prepared the ground for the change, made implementation of initiatives possible. My analysis five years on is that initiation and implementation have taken place, the harder activity of institutionalisation is now happening. It has occurred for some initiatives i.e. the literacy policy, the C.A.Ts activity, the self-esteem work, Success Maker™ (an individual learning computer programme) and the mentoring activities. It has not worked so well for some of the other initiatives.

I have had an effect on the whole process, and I need to recognise this. I have played a major part in bringing about the expectation, the learning environment and the opportunity for colleagues to work in an atmosphere where change is accepted and workable. To use Fullan's (1992) concept, I have created 'interdependency' between members of the institution. That is between teacher and teacher and between teachers and other staff in the institution. I have also broken down some of the barriers that older teachers provide. Fullan (1992:5) commenting on the process of managing change suggests that older teachers '*Cultivated their garden, figuratively speaking, and built protective walls around them*'. This collaboration and openness is an essential activity if implementation and change is to be effective. To explore the embedding of the change culture further it is necessary to analyse the outcomes of some of the initiatives. Not just in terms of hard indicators like external examination results although there is evidence of improvement at a whole school level taking place there, but also in the attitudes and work practices of the

staff. In March 2002, the acceptance of lesson monitoring of teaching is now widespread. Teaching staff now ask members of SMT to visit their lessons and to give feedback on what they observe. Individuals are specifically asking to be included in university research projects that are taking place in the school. The school is engaged on seven research projects at the present time and an increasing number of staff are making contacts with HE institutions and getting involved at a personal level in Action Research. Twenty-three staff have indicated an interest in professional development activities offered by Bath University. There is an increase in meetings called for parents to give information about the teaching and learning processes employed by the school. Visiting Professors of Education are invited in on a regular basis for parents and staff to engage with the wider world of education. Most staff have now taken part in the ICT training on offer and 40 staff have undertaken the New Opportunities Fund training in ICT which brings information technology into the classroom for use by pupils. This movement in both professional development and raised awareness to become more engaged in the teaching and learning process is a direct result of the initiatives undertaken during the research period. A change in outlook, expectation, and working practice has taken place. Many of these activities have been made available through my work with teaching and non-teaching colleagues and through my relationship with a number of universities.

What contribution have I made to the academy?

What I have to contribute to the academy is one practising teacher's view of his world of work. An attempt to explain and describe what the process of teaching and learning involves from the teacher's and the pupil's eye view. The originality of my work is that it is classroom based, using pupils and teachers in an actual school. Not everything has been successful. The environment has not always been conducive to progress but it is an honest and real description of what has taken place during one school's attempt to improve.

The way in which I have approached the task is, I would argue, unique. I have undertaken a study of singularity, me, while engaged in a series of small vignettes involved in the process of school improvement that has led to a change in the school's effectiveness as an institution. The standards, values and beliefs that I hold as I have undertaken the process of Winter's (1989) '*improvisatory self realisation*' is also an important contribution. Wilson and Wilson (1998:360) note the importance of the '*qualities of the educators themselves*' to education, and I have made this a central part of my study. 'This is me' in Chapter 2 was an important statement for me, because the driving force for my teaching and the effect of

my professional work with colleagues is a direct result of the person I am, the values I hold and the standards I work to. I offer these factors to the academy as an important contribution to the knowledge base for the educational world. Additionally, I have fully embraced the Boyer (1990) notion of the '*scholarships of application, teaching and learning, integration and discovery*' and have added the scholarship of enquiry. These are inextricably bound within the work of the thesis and the examples cited throughout, and are clear evidence of it. Boyer was focussed on the work of universities, but I have brought that rigour, excitement and application into the classroom. It has been an integral part of the development of my living educational theory as I live my professional practice with my colleagues. I have used the vocabulary of the classroom, the words of the pupils and the feeling of my colleagues to give colour and reality to the data, and in the process, engaged in triangulation, so essential to the research methodology.

Question 6 - Is any of the work that I have undertaken transferable and useful to other teachers at my school?

House (1974:245) cautioned:

Avoid the primary pursuit of transferable innovations. Distributed problems cannot be solved by a single innovation that will work in all local settings, for those settings are not only different and unpredictable in specifics, but they are also constantly changing... Different innovations will be more or less useful under widely different specific circumstance of their application. There is no Golden Fleece.

Stoll (1999:24) in a way supports House, '*What works in one context, say an inner city school, may lack relevance for another, for example, a rural school*'. I have a cautious optimism here about transferability. I accept that the innovatory initiatives being managed at St John's will have little transferability elsewhere, but the concept of an adaptive model is, I think, a possibility. The improvement activities the school is undertaking, the management strategies, and the manner in which both personal and group learning was developed could be adapted to other surroundings. Glatter *et al* (1988:126) when discussing improvement process and the findings of the International Schools Improvement Project (ISIP) came to the conclusion that '*The process which a school needs to go through when it improves is largely the same wherever it occurs*'. Thus the results of my school's improvement process may have some relevance elsewhere. Research shows that major features of 'a bottom up approach', collaborative working for both teachers and pupils, and the concept of ownership are all transferable and desirable. If other schools can learn by seeing how it worked in one school then they could possibly apply it to theirs. The caution is that such processes look different in different schools.

Different cultures, ethos and management styles will all need different approaches before that idea of transferability can be considered an effective possibility. Perhaps the metaphor is that the blueprint is not transferable, but the various elements of the process once they have been adapted to suit the different environment in which they are being considered will be.

One of the significant steps to have taken place in the recent past is the growing development and acceptance of the value and importance of teacher based research and the contribution that the pupil body can make to that research. Many teachers now appear to be hungry for knowledge. Gone is the concept of the teacher didactically dispensing knowledge to pupils who are not engaged in the educative process and not considered to be part of an educational partnership. Today's process is very different; pupils demand and are given more say in the process. Pupils are able to articulate their needs clearly if they are given the opportunity, and the teaching staff are more open to the suggestion and recommendations that are forthcoming. We now have an obligation as teachers to listen to, and work with pupils. Fielding (2000) however does caution that if we are to use more than Rudduck *et al's* (1996) power and appropriateness of the pupil voice, then we have to do so whole heartedly so as not to betray the pupils' interests in the research process. Fielding (2000:1) points out:

If we are to avoid dangers of developing increasingly sophisticated ways of involving students that, often unwittingly, end up betraying their interests, accommodating them to the status quo, and in a whole variety of ways reinforcing assumptions and approaches that are destructive of anything that could be considered remotely empowering then we have to explore approaches that have different starting points and quite different dispositions and intentions.

Don't ask if you don't want to hear seems to be the message here. On many occasions in the past, we as teachers have gone through the process of consultation with the pupil body, only then to take the 'teacher knows best approach'. Fielding and Sharnbrook School's contribution to the IQEA project shows that pupils do have an appropriate opinion that should be considered as a partnership action in a school. In addition, the issues of '***power, authority, freedom and equality***' are important considerations to the success of that partnership process. I hope that my interaction with pupils in my vignettes has given appropriate weight and consideration to these issues. Southworth and Lincoln (1999) commenting on the work of Pollard, Thiessen and Filer (1997:11) refer to the '***biggest challenge of all, namely to allow children a share of the power we as adults have in their classroom and lives***'. If I have given this power to the pupils then the research is valuable.

I join the ranks of Eames (1995), Evans (1996), Laidlaw (1997), Holly (1997) and D'Arcy (1998) in creating a piece of work that is a contribution not only to the schools where these teachers work, but also to the educational community as a whole.

The teaching staff at St John's works in an environment of teacher research that is actively pursued and promoted by the Headteacher. He sets out to be the '*leading learner*' (Hopkins *et al* 1994) and leads by his own example. The process of lifelong learning to use his words is '*non negotiable*'. This is a clear sign to the teaching staff that there has to be a move forward. The mission statement of the school '*is that it strives to be a beacon of excellence to which others aspire*'. If the school and the teaching staff are to achieve this, then there has to be learning taking place by the staff as well as the pupils. For this learning to take place, the culture of the school and the style of leadership enjoyed also have to be appropriate. Beare *et al* (1989) say that culture is '*situationally unique*' and I support that notion. As far as St John's is concerned, a specific learning environment has been massaged into a position where staff and pupils wish to strive for this concept of excellence. It is Fullan (1988) who makes the observation that any attempt to improve a school that does not address school culture can be seen as '*doomed to tinkering*'. Stoll (1999b) supports the need for the development of an appropriate school culture if an internal capacity is to be developed. Fullan (1998) also goes on to create the notion that any change has to come from the '*hearts and minds*' of those involved. If this total involvement does not occur then innovation and culture change will not take place. Michael Huberman (1992) goes further in reinforcement by implying that unless this change, which is taking place in the hearts and minds, does not involve and embrace the values and beliefs of the teachers, then the change can only be superficial. If however the leadership style is clear, strong and unambiguous, then to quote Hopkins *et al* (1994:155) the school structure:

Becomes the vehicle for empowering staff, a network which informs and supports staff as they seek to bring to life the values and goals of the school community in its day to day activities.

It is appropriate at this point to review the position that exists in the school. If the school is adopting these learning characteristics, then the Headteacher is the focal point of that drive. It is from here that policy is formulated and direction is given. Through his own beliefs, experience and personal values, the Headteacher sets the tone of the school. Southworth (1994:56) points out that it is the Headteacher's educational philosophy that:

Determines in large measure, and especially in primary and middle schools, the nature of teaching and learning in the school she or he leads. Moreover, heads

act as models for teacher and staff development. Where they talk openly about their growth and undertake further professional development they demonstrate to others the importance of professional learning. Where the head and other senior staff retain a strong and consistent interest in pupils' learning they help to focus staff's attention on these matters. And when they concern themselves with teachers' development and staff development activities they show how central they regard these processes to be to the school's development.

I would go further, I don't think that this just applies to Primary and Middle schools. I draw a parallel to the situation at St John's, which is a comprehensive secondary school, and I think it fits here just as well. It goes further than this however, the culture and ethos of the school is also set in part by the leadership of the head. De Pree (1992:2) points out that:

Leadership, like jazz, is a public performance, dependant on so many things – the environment, the volunteers in the band, the need for everybody to perform as individuals and as a group, the absolute dependence of the leader on the members of the band.

This statement is important to me. While the Headteacher can have the vision, unless the staff and the pupils both share and contribute to that vision then success will be difficult. Everyone has an individual contribution to make, but the whole effect must be in tune with the way the Headteacher wishes the school to move. I see my contribution as enhancing, encouraging and facilitating that togetherness.

To examine the style of leadership offered is not the brief of this thesis nor is it fair as during the time of the research there have been two Headteachers at the school.

Nevertheless the basis of my argument is located in the present time, and under the regime of the present Headteacher. The influence of the Head and the direction the school is taking is current to the thesis and justifies to me its inclusion at this point. In an analysis of leadership style, I use the differentiation of West-Burnham (1997) who makes a distinction between leadership and management. Leadership involves vision, people, strategic issues, and transformation. Managing is about implementation, transaction, means and systems. The vision and transformation is particular to the school. I live in a professional world that is beyond the Leithwood (1992) description of '*transactional leadership*', where for a variety of rewards in their broadest sense, transactional leadership helps people to recognise what has to be done to achieve a desired outcome. At St John's we go further than that. The style of leadership is in my analysis more in line with that of Mitchell and Tucker's (1992) and Leithwood *et al's* (1999) concept of '*transformational Leadership*'. Under this style of leadership, the leader not only manages the structure but also impacts the culture to achieve school development. This is very much in line with the whole

concept of the school improvement movement. Mitchell and Tucker's definition of such leadership is:

Leaders are more concerned about gaining overall co-operation and energetic participation from organisation members than they are in getting particular tasks performed... effective leadership requires an approach that transforms the feelings, attitudes and beliefs of their followers.... Transformational leaders are 'people orientated'... they build relationships and help fellows develop goals and identify strategies for their accomplishments.

I identify myself with this style of management. I am very concerned as a 'peoples' person' to take all staff along in the process of learning and discovery as a strategy for bringing about school improvement. The process of collaboration and sharing is vital to the process. Rosenholtz (1985), Little (1990), Hargreaves, A (1991,1992, and 1993) and Fullan and Hargreaves (1992) strongly support and encourage a collaborative culture in a 'moving school' (Hopkins *et al*, 1994). This concept in turn fits very well into school improvement, and leads the narrative of my answer to my own question into the work outlined in Chapter 7 on the Year 10 and Year 11 Mentoring Scheme. As a result of the evaluation and report that I produced at the end of the academic year 1998/9 outlined in **Appendix 2**, the Action Research cycle has started a new turn. With an improved process, the new staff involved in the mentoring process are receiving the benefit of my research results and practical advice on how to conduct efficient mentoring interviews based on my initial work.

It is in line with the findings of the IQEA projects described by Hopkins *et al* (1994) and the work of Caldwell and Spinks (1988). The very essence of the Action Research cycle calls for evaluation and then progress in the light of that evaluation. My work is part of the evaluative process both in parts and as a whole. The parts are the various initiatives that I have been involved with and the whole is my very presence as a Professional Development Manager and Senior Manager. The personal response to the question of whether my work is transferable and useful to my colleagues is 'yes' and is corroborated by the research evidence presented within the thesis. As part of the teaching team, my contribution has been valued and used by the Headteacher and colleagues, and my role as the Professional Development Manager has been enhanced by the very fact that I am engaged in the research process. To further pursue this concept, consideration is now given to the next question.

Question 7 - Have I changed as a person, researcher and teacher and if I have what are the benefits of that change?

To answer this question is both easy and difficult. Easy because I can provide concrete validation of change, difficult because some of the changes, I perceive are subjective value judgements. It is also difficult because they have occurred over the time frame 1995 – 2002. Changes have undoubtedly taken place. As part of the final triangulation process in the development of my living educational theory, I need to undertake an external validation of the learning that I have achieved during this research process and the management of my role as the Professional Development Manager in the school. I feel I need to do this because internally I find it difficult to articulate what learning I have achieved. External validation of perceptions and fact are a much more powerful form of evidence than personal internal value judgements. The knowledge of my learning achievements will help me in my quest for the articulation of my educational theory, and will perhaps have a wider application to the educational academy. The application will be a contribution to the knowledge of how a practising teacher develops over time and how this contributed to the process of teaching and learning not just for the teacher concerned, but also for the pupils, the school and the world of education.

For concrete evidence, I asked my Headteacher Dr Patrick Hazlewood if he could detect any changes in me since he came to the school in 1996. The interview is recorded verbatim, and is found as **Appendix 16**. Here is another example of dialectical dialogue at work. There is an exchange of ideas and perceptions from which emerges an agreed outcome that is a compromise of two different points of view.

This interview was of crucial importance to me. It did several things that are of significance both to me and to my research. Firstly it gave a great boost to my confidence and self-esteem. To have the Head of the school openly supporting and encouraging the work that you are doing is both crucial and motivating. Secondly, it further helped to lay the ghost of academic failure; that strange state of mind that I have been in for the best part of 40 years. To have someone whom I professionally admire, to be so honest as to admit similar feelings, to have faced similar ‘academic failures’ and yet be so successful as a person, is cathartic for me. The support of the conversation with Martin (line 31) has made me realise the importance of what I am doing and what I have done. It has made me re-evaluate the position of my work in the academy. I now realise the awesome responsibility I share with my teacher colleagues in educating the next generation. How could I not see or

appreciate the value of my contribution? My comparison of the relative merits of a Ph.D in Mathematics or Astrophysics (line 35) pales in comparison to the importance of education as a subject for study. How could I not see the relevance of what I am doing, not only not see, but also not even start to appreciate its value. If this thesis takes the knowledge of teaching forwards, then my contribution to that process is of significance. If future teachers learn what makes a teacher work, think, act and apply knowledge then that is significant. If an explanation of my working practice and the way my standards, values and aspirations are inextricably entwined within my pedagogy and is explicated for others to see and understand then what could be more helpful to future generations of teachers? That is not to say that all I do, say or even think is perfect, far from it; but I am sure that a measure of any kind will help future educators in their own development processes. I also believe that to give a full and clear explanation of how my standards and values, that are part of the inner me, are integrated into my work as an important attribute, is important for any person considering education as a profession. It is a process and a skill that has to come from 'inside'. It cannot be bolted onto other skills or attributes. In an earlier chapter, I spoke of teacher artistry. While this is an important part of practice, the underpinning personal values of the teacher must be in existence and place. The artistry then has honesty and sincerity, two crucial components in a successful educative process.

Another aspect of this interview dialogue was the way it changed during the process. What started off almost as a formal semi-structured interview quite quickly merged into two professionals having a mutually supportive conversation about an issue that has crucial value to both parties. The sharing, honesty and openness of the dialogue is an indication of the trust held by both participant of the other. There is a sharing of common beliefs and personal values (lines 16, 20, 24, 32, 40 and 44). These are examples where both participants are reaffirming and supporting the ideals and concepts that both hold as educational 'touchstones'.

From a school improvement perspective, points 51 to 55 are an important area both for me and my Ph.D research, and the school. The extract below is from **Appendix 16**.

51. MAB - I was disappointed in what you said at the meeting last night about the initiatives. You said that you felt that we had lost momentum and direction. A year ago we were very focussed and had an enormous number of initiatives and I thought they were all positively moving forwards. Having gone back through the initiatives they are still ticking over, but they have lost their highlight.

- 52. PKH - They have lost their momentum and they have lost an element of accountability. When I spoke last night I highlighted all the ones that I have concern about, but there are a number that I didn't mention because they are moving on very well**
- 53. MAB - Success Maker for instance is going from strength to strength. It has had its problems but now it is becoming embedded in the school as a real tool for learning but you are right, the literacy initiative peaks and troughs, the Numeracy is limping along. The thrust for teaching and learning is stumbling along which is a shame because that is really important.**
- 54. PKH - It's a key objective and a key part of our mission statement and we haven't really got to grips with it. I do think that we have got to sit and hammer it through because unless we get it cracked we cannot move forwards.**
- 55. MAB - It will be putting a named person as project manager that will move it forwards. As a school I think we are getting better, target setting for all sorts of areas is improving, we are becoming harder edged but we could be even harder. Thanks for sharing your thoughts with me, I have found them interesting informative and helpful. One of the significant steps for my confidence has been the recognition that other people have doubts and worries as well, and the confirmation by you that what I am doing is both valuable to me, to you and the school and worthwhile to the academy of education.**

The Headteacher's perception that some of the initiatives were not progressing well was a disappointment to me as I stated in the conversation. It showed that the difficulty of sustainability has not yet been conquered. It was not just the issue of sustainability however, it was the complexity of the management of the whole process of change. While the whole school focus was directed firmly at these initiatives progress was both substantial and positive. When the pressure was removed as some elements of management moved onto other foci then the impetus clearly dropped. What is important at this point is twofold; one, that we have recognised it and can now review our priorities in view of that revelation. Secondly, that for me there is an issue to be engaged in regarding my role as a manager. The quality control of the initiatives seems to have failed. How did some of these failing initiatives get to a point of concern? The answer is quite clear to me, we as a management team failed to appoint a project leader, someone who was accountable for the progress, completion and review of the initiatives. We have learned from this process; as a direct result of the conversation between the Head and myself. At the next Senior Management Team meeting, all projects and initiatives were allocated such a leader. In essence, a change in practice has come out of the failure. An Action Research cycle has been completed and the next turn in the spiral started. Personally, I resolved to be more proactive in monitoring the improvement initiatives still being undertaken. As the

Headteacher noted, some were still performing at the appropriate level, and I felt it part of my managerial role to encourage this progress.

It is a further demonstration of the way I work in a '*relational way of knowing*', which gives examples of a caring communication that I think is one of my strong attributes. The thesis question is concerned with 'how can 'I' working with others bring about School Improvement?' and the dialogue such as that above is central to that 'working together' process. These questions have all helped me to formulate my living educational theory.

My Living Educational Theory

The concept of developing educational theories has been a lifelong work for the researcher Jack Whitehead, and I quote from Lomax (1999: 4):

Jack Whitehead has made an important epistemological contribution to the idea. He explains that his research is underpinned by three ideas, 'the first is that in questions of the kind, 'How do I improve my practice?' 'I' exists as a living contradiction in holding values and experiencing their denial at the same time as asking the question. The second is that 'I' as a living contradiction is motivated to improve what he or she is doing.... The third is that the descriptions and explanations for their own learning which individuals create constitute their own living educational theories'. (Whitehead 1998:10).

Living educational theory is an explanation by an individual of his / her own educational practice in terms of an evaluation of the past practice and an intention to create an improvement which is not yet in existence. The theory encapsulates the experience of 'I' existing as a living contradiction in questions of the kind 'How do I improve what I am doing?' The living theory is created in the description and explanation of learning and educational development that is part of the process of answering the question. The explanations are characterised by integrating values as explanatory principles with the traditional forms of conceptual frameworks drawn from the theories of others. The values are the standards of judgement used to test the validity of the claims to educational knowledge (Whitehead 1993).

That is Jack Whitehead's definition of a living educational theory. What I have done in this thesis is develop my theory. That is to say, I have taken the precepts above but personalised the whole process to portray and illustrate me. My theory is not in the form of the conventional theory of the propositional form outlined in Chapter 3. It is in the form of a dynamic, ever changing and developing model. What I have written is a personal contribution. I am proud of what I have produced and hope that it gives a living explanation of a teacher at work with his pupils and colleagues in a classroom environment. The narrative and the theory that emerges from it is highly personalised, it accurately describes my work and me and I hope the concept of producing such a personal

living educational theory is transferable to others. They should be able to use this frame or the model to explore, describe, analyse, and evaluate their work. My values, skills attributes and professional experience are all unique in combination to me, but the living educational theory model can be generalised to others.

I offer my living educational theory and this thesis as an explanation of a professional educator working with others in a process of enhancing the learning and achievement of pupils in a whole school improvement process. I have presented it in the spirit of Polanyi (1958) whose philosophy is that I am entitled to understand the world from my point of view as a person with my own originality and exercising judgement with '*universal intent*'. I have then tried to make that point of view accessible to others. I have involved pupils and staff in the process, and as a Professional Development Manager I have tried to influence the work of my colleagues in the process. At the same time I must recognise that I too have been educated, enhanced and professionally developed in the process.

In the next part of the chapter I wish to draw the reader's attention to the processes I have engaged in while undertaking this research.

The process and styles

As I outlined in the opening chapters of this thesis, I intended to use a variety of styles and strategies in the process of explaining how I have developed my living educational theory. This has taken the form of a synthesis of different research techniques. I have been supported by the idea of Newman (1998) who describes exactly what I have undertaken in the process of researching myself:

Teacher/Action Research is about discovering ourselves, about uncovering our assumptions – assumptions about learning, about teaching, about values and beliefs. An important first step, therefore, in becoming a teacher / Action Researcher is to enter into an exploration of how we compose our own practice. What beliefs underlie what we choose to do in the classroom? What internal and external constraints affect the decisions we make? What counts as 'data'? What might we do differently?

Stoll (1999:1) has a slightly different interpretation of teaching and teachers as they both move into the C21st. She concurs with all the improvement literature as she says, '*If all our students are to realise their potential, then their schools must also realise their potential*'. These are sentiments few would disagree with and she goes on to make the point that what goes on in the classroom between the teacher and the pupil is of paramount importance. So often in all schools, lists, processes, curricula, and a myriad of other

activities divert energies from this focus. She and I support the concept of Delors *et al* (1996) '*of the treasure within*'. If we can capitalise on the expertise, the experience and the excitement that teachers can bring to the classroom then learning of high quality can take place. The ethos of the classroom, the learning environment of the school, the involvement of teachers and pupils and the learning process are all-important ingredients in the recipe of success. We must also recognise that parents too have a role in this process, but this area is beyond the scope of this thesis. Stoll's (1999: 2) paper goes on to suggest and describe as good practice exactly what I have been narrating in my thesis. That is, the educational knowledge base should be derived from:

What learners bring to their learning, including a growing knowledge base from brain research, more inclusive concepts of a range of intelligences, and a wide range of theories about learning styles. In short, learners do not all learn in the same way.

What motivates learning?

What constitutes effective learning, and how the process of learning takes place. The different locations where the process of learning takes place (in school, in out of school organised learning centres, at home, in the wider social environment).

In this thesis I have investigated some of those questions at classroom level. As part of my success, I have added to the '*internal capacity*' of the school to change, and learn as an institution. Hopkins *et al* (1994) in the IQEA project, West (1998), Stoll (1999) and Barth (1990) all suggest that this capacity is an important component if the school is to improve. Stoll (1999:op cit) '*Internal capacity is the power to engage in and sustain continuous learning of teachers and the school itself for the purpose of enhancing student learning*'. Stoll's (1999) paper '*Realising Our Potential: Building Capacity for Lasting Improvement*' is a synergy of researcher's thoughts on where she sees education going in the C21st. From that paper I want to make the link between '*internal capacity*' and a '*moving school*'. I have investigated capacity in relation to the 'good teacher' Alan, and the distillation is being used by others in their own professional development. This is an example of '*internal capacity*'. The environment where members of the school learn and change at the same time, where teachers as well as pupils are learners, make this crucial link. As the Professional Development Manager I have been a central part of these two processes.

Stoll (1999) has provided a frame from which the process of teaching and learning can move forward. She has made a valuable contribution to the process by highlighting the potential that teacher research can and should make to the educational knowledge base.

She clearly identifies the importance of values, beliefs and standards that teachers could share with each other, and the processes and influences both external and internal that will affect the improvement process. She has also added the component of '*connectedness*' (Stoll 1999b: 520). This is a realisation for a school to recognise that all improvement activities that they undertake will have an effect on and be affected by other influences both internal and external. It is the management of the influences on the change and improvement process that delineates a school with '*internal capacity*'. I have used this frame for my own work. Using the context of School Improvement and School Effectiveness to research my own role and effect on both pupils and teachers in my school. I would suggest that I add to her significant work by including the personal and human component of narrative and voices of the teachers and the pupils in the classroom. My in-depth use of pupil and teacher voices in the Alan vignette, and the voices in the Year 11 mentoring scheme evaluation and the results of the many interviews and conversations with colleagues have added reality to the theoretical framework. It is my belief that linguistic statements on their own will not be sufficient for teachers in training. It is the 'hands on' experience of teachers in the classroom together with the values and standards that they hold which will give new teachers the real insight into what is required to be effective. My theory is that if I can make teachers more aware, more effective, more reflective and more open to the views particularly of the pupils then in turn this could bring about improvement in pupil performance. One of my claims is that I have brought about the start of this change process in my school.

One of the major criticisms I have of the combined School Improvement and School Effectiveness Movements is that they tended to be very impersonal and rational in outlook and operation in the late 1980s and early 1990s. They seemed to be divorced from the classroom reality. The concept that 'if you do A, then B will follow and then C', is too simplistic in the reality of school life. Elliott (1996:223) also had concerns over this technocratic view of school effectiveness. He argued for a more complicated process that involved much more of a sociological influence to school operations:

The idea that the outputs of learning can be determined independently of pupil inputs, and pre-specified in terms of clusters of trained abilities linked to a stable and unchanging set of productive enterprises, is already becoming obsolete as a basis for curriculum design and being gradually replaced by the idea of a core of generic personal abilities; cognitive, interpersonal and motivational.

As already stated Fullan (1992) and Miles (1986) point out the non-linear pattern of development and improvement. Since the start of the 1990s, the fields of School

Effectiveness and School Improvement have continued to move closely together. The International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement (ICSEI) has continued to add prolifically to reports on research done in these two fields. At the end of the 1990s, research in both fields into factors that impact on processes and on the teacher in the classroom both softened this technocratic approach. School Effectiveness has continued to look at processes, but has become much more finely tuned in terms of its application. There has been a focus for instance, on the development of a different range of outcome measures to measure school effects, not only in the cognitive domain and that of basic skills, but also in social areas. Creemers *et al* (1998) comments on the progress of processes saying '*Important progress made in the conceptualisation and measurement of processes at different levels of the educational system*'. In the field of School Improvement, Creemers *et al* (1998:129) notes that the emphasis has turned towards an understanding of the processes of learning. As part of that learning the knowledge of School Effectiveness research has become important.

Experience with attempting to deliver effectiveness knowledge in the 'vehicle' of School Improvement has led to a focus upon the reliability or fidelity of programme implementation. The use of 'off the shelf' designs where schools are required to implement organisational and curricular changes reliably, rather than invent their own, is of interest here. The 'blending' of approaches, whereby schools both receive existing knowledge and have the capacity to move beyond that knowledge by generation of their own, is clearly important.

In this case, a technical list approach won't work on its own. There has to be a more sympathetic or empathetic approach to the process, taking into account the multifacetedness of factors in differing educational institutions and environments. What I have done is extend the development context by researching what happens in the classroom with teachers as they apply their own values, standards and beliefs to the improvement process. This then accommodates for the non-linear activity and opens up the debate to a less technical but more human level. I see St John's moving towards Elliott's (1996) educational ideal embracing Stoll's capacity and encouraging pupils to be actively involved in their own educative process. Stoll (1999:223) reinforces the pupils involvement in the process:

In learning to take as much responsibility as they need to be able to locate the development of their natural talents within a personally constructed vision of a life worth living. Involving teachers in the development of a form of mass education which gives all pupils equal access to the cultural resources of society, is in my view, the major challenge for school improvement in the future.

What I have done in my school, for which I would claim originality, is to open up this human front to allow all individuals staff and pupils to grow, to give them both space and opportunity. To allow mistakes to be made, but also created a culture where people can try things, go up blind alleys, recognise failure but not fear it and then encourage attempts in other directions. This new culture has been the skeleton of the body, the co-operation and involvement of the pupils the flesh and upon which the clothes of Stoll will then hang well; without the base the lists of categories themselves are insufficient.

Question - What might the reader have learnt from this thesis?

It is difficult to project myself into the minds of others. However, I hope that some key issues from this thesis have emerged. Firstly that the school as an institution changed over the time of the research from a quiescent rural comprehensive into a thrusting Technology College with most of the staff prepared to accept lifelong learning. Where co-operative teaching and learning is constructive, helpful, non-threatening and productive in the raising of achievement. Where pupils have a voice that is listened to, heard and acted upon is in line not only with the thinking of Rudduck *et al* (1996), but also Thiessen (1997) and Fielding (2000). Where Action Research is a useful tool which should be part of every teacher's daily activities, not a bolted on addition. Finally, where colleagues have expertise that can and should be shared. Naisbett and Aburdene (1990:16) suggest; '*The most exciting breakthroughs in the twenty-first century will occur not because of technology but because of an expanding concept of what it means to be human*'. We must capitalise on the personal expertise of the teachers in the classroom. They have a lot to say, and deserve a forum where they can say it and be valued.

Question-What have I learnt from this thesis?

As described earlier, not all the activity recorded in this research has been successful, but it has been a true record of the activity that has taken place. The failures in terms of evaluation for the school have been as important as the successes. By this I mean that as an organic growing and developing institution, it has required failure to sharpen up the processes and bring them more clearly into focus. As the Action Research Cycle has turned it has been possible for both the individuals and the school to progress. The monitoring processes have been used to aid evaluation and this in turn has resulted in amendment and change. As with the management of all change, this has brought its own problems of resistance, conservatism and protectionism, but generally in the school the new processes have been an improvement on the previous ones. With regard to personnel, my subjective

value judgement is that the majority of the teaching and non-teaching staff at the school are in a different frame of mind to that of six years ago. They are more receptive to ideas and suggestions, more questioning but more open to innovation and more forward looking in terms of their own and the school's future. Stoll (1999:27) asks the question, '*what happens next?*' and then answers it with the statement '*We need to place learning at the school's heart. This can only be done if schools have the internal capacity to engage in and sustain such continuous learning*'. Supporting this concept, Hargreaves and Fullan (1999: 7) are suggesting the concept of '*mentoring*' as a staff development way forwards into the C21st. I am delighted to see this as a suggestion, as I have proposed in this thesis that the teacher Alan, is already adopting that stance very effectively as are the members of the Directorate for Science.

In any practically, intellectually or emotionally complex occupation, new entrants to it need someone who can show them the ropes, develop their competence and understanding, help them fit in. Even experienced practitioners can benefit from having the advice, support and role modelling of wiser, more senior colleagues. Teaching is no exception. After decades of assuming that teachers taught alone, learned to sink or swim by themselves and got better over time only through their own individual trial and error, there is an increasing commitment to the idea and evidence that all teachers are more effective when they can learn from and are supported by a strong community of colleagues, and that new teachers can benefit greatly from having a mentor who will be a guide and coach for them. At the same time, mentors can gain as much from their protégés as their protégés do from them - developing new insights into their own and others' teaching, new relationships, and a renewal of commitment and enthusiasm to their craft and career.

The study of an individual has been a revelation to me in terms of the data that was achieved and the value it gave to the individual concerned and as a corollary to the other colleagues involved in that case study. To the individual, Alan Shelton, it has given him confidence and a raised self-esteem. Since that research Alan has, as reported earlier, been promoted to the post of Assistant Headteacher. Watching him at work during the Spring Term 2002, I can see the confidence evident in his dealings with colleagues and pupils. I can also hear in his conversations at Senior Management level, the power of his convictions and the measured approach to problems that are a new experience for him. To suggest that all of this is a result of the focussed research would be arrogant in the extreme, but by Alan's own admission it has helped. What of the other colleagues who were 'touched' by the process? Again, there must be awareness of subjectivity here, but there does seem to be an air of increased confidence from the newer teachers who Alan has had dealings with.

As I draw to the end of the research, I need to re-examine the research question. During the narrative of the thesis, I have indicated a shift of emphasis as the research has progressed. This is not because the original research question was faulty in its concept, but as the data has emerged, my position and role in the school improvement has become more focused. To accommodate this there is now a need to refine the research question for a final time. The question now is:

How can I as an educator and Professional Development Manager working with teachers, support and enhance the learning and achievement of pupils in a whole school improvement process?

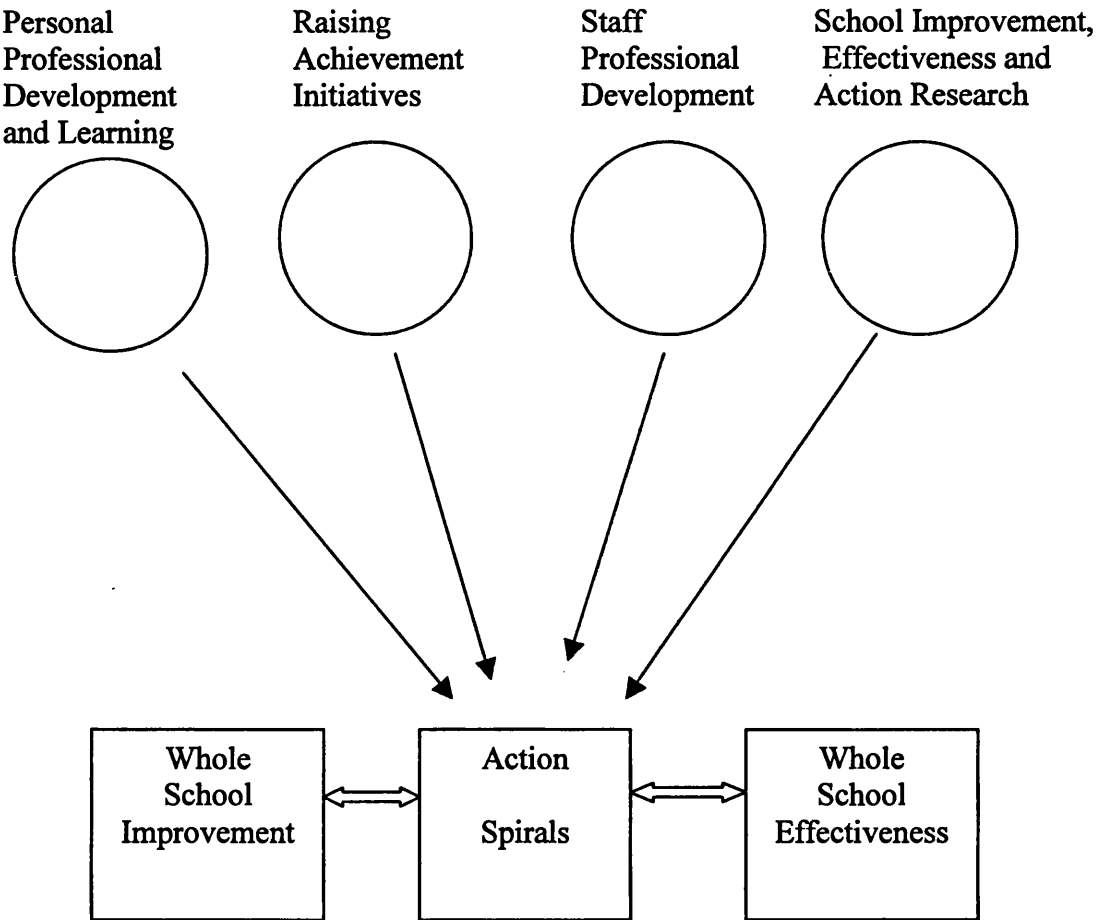
The subtle change of emphasis has been to include the word educator into the question, a simple yet crucial adjustment in my eyes. An educator in my terms is an individual who has aided teachers and pupils on a journey of discovery through a variety of approaches, processes and strategies until they reach a point where they are fully equipped with the skills to continue the process of lifelong learning at an independent level. I have been able to take them down a road from dependency to independency.

Changes that occurred during the research process

The figures that follow give a diagrammatic interpretation of the development path of my thesis which will give the reader an understanding of the way in which the improvement activities became more focussed and integrated together with the way the school changed. The research started with the school in a stage of development as illustrated by Figure 3, in Chapter 4 and repeated here. At an early stage of my research I was aware that there was a learning environment in the school that reluctantly allowed for development to take place, but it lacked co-ordination. Professional activities were taking place but lacked coherence and Stoll's (1999) '*connectedness*'. The processes were not embedded in the life and learning environment of the school. Consequently, improvements although they were being made were patchy and non-integrated. There was no overarching central co-ordination.

The start of the research

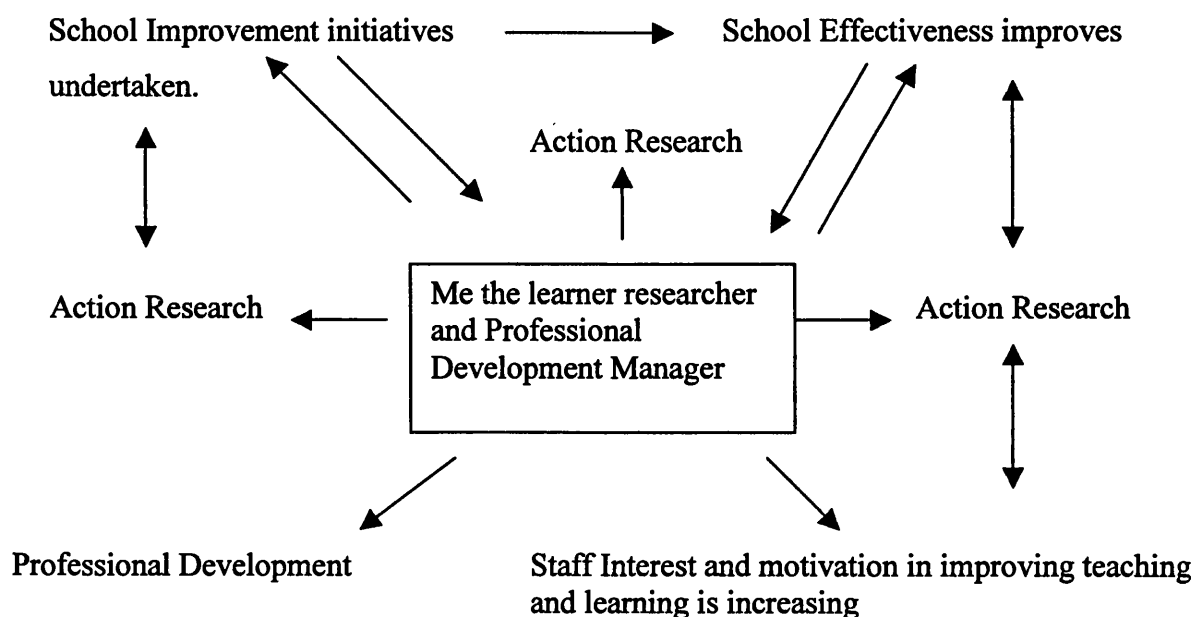
Figure 3



Mid point in the research

Figure 4 represents a half way house in the school's development and mine. The diagram is intended to depict the backward and forward movement of activities and processes in the school. I am trying to show in this figure how I have become the central figure in the school's activities giving feedback to, and receiving feedback from, the different activities and groups of people. At the same time, the diagram is depicting the fact that these groups are developing, undertaking and managing the activities themselves. I see my own research and the school's involvement in the Action Research cycles as being a central key activity. From that base, School Improvement initiatives were started with a relational position on improvement in School Effectiveness. At this time there is much activity with data flowing in and out and a more connected and purposeful learning environment, but no total integration. My role as Professional Development Manager flows from my central position and allows me to influence and co-ordinate activities of development and improvement.

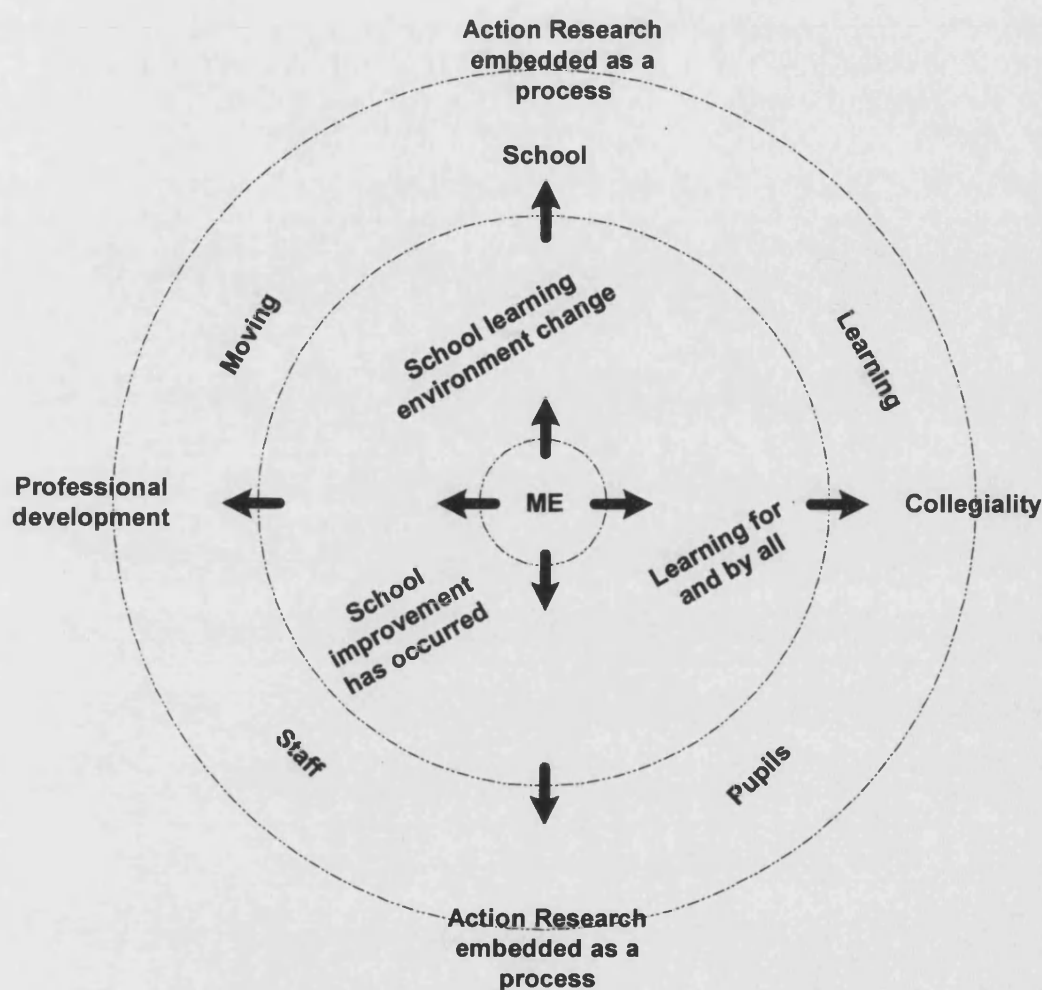
Figure 4 A diagram of my position in relation to activities of the school at mid point in the research process.



The end of the research

By the end of the research period another picture emerges. Figure 5 is showing what I might call the 'circles of unity'. A more focussed and co-ordinated learning environment now prevails. Figure 5 shows me continuing to be at the centre of activities, but development has now taken place which has altered the relative positions of the other components. There is now a feeling of unity and '*connectedness*' Stoll (1999b) about staff and pupil activity. An important change in the school is that there is now a much more embedded positive learning environment. There is unity in terms of working together towards the common and shared goal of learning. This is noted in the conclusions to the thesis later in this chapter. The professional development of the staff and the feeling of collegiality now in place have enabled these developments to take place. '*Collegiality and communication*' is recognised by Harris (2001:482) as an important part of the improvement process at department and subsequently whole school level. The development by research, dissemination and sharing from department to department is the way to sustain internal '*capacity*'. Action Research and its progressive outcomes have been a major contributor and the vehicle, which has brought about this change.

Figure 5 a diagram of my position in relation to activities of the school at the end of the research process - the circle of unity



It is not just me undertaking Action Research, but many staff are now involved. The staff and pupils now embrace the concept of learning for all and by all members of the school community i.e., teacher learning and pupil learning. The school has become a 'moving and learning school' and is showing Stoll's (1999) '*internal capacity for change*'. What has also changed is the openness of staff to receive advice from peers, and the willingness to be involved in change processes at a personal and professional level. Pupils now have a voice that is listened to, heard and acted upon. This has created an environment of collegiality from which new initiatives, ideas or working practices flow with ease and motivation. The Integrated Curriculum Project started in September 2001 is an excellent example of a whole school, whole staff development which is radical, threatening and exciting for the school. It has placed the school at the forefront of curriculum development nationally and internationally. It has welded the staff into a positive thinking motivated group of professionals proud to be involved in an educational project which will have a

major impact on the pupil development in the school. My learning and the development of my living educational theory have been the change agent for the current position.

During the thesis I have explicated my personal and professional growth and learning over the research period and indicated how others can use my development as a mirror for their own development. Further than this, I have shown how, as I have developed my own living educational theory, I have been learning how best to develop and integrate improvement strategies into the life and work of the school. This had a positive effect on the whole school improvement process and I would claim an original piece of research where the pupils in the school, and the teachers have worked together over time to produce a narrative of an improvement process at work. The originality is the ‘warts and all’ description of everyday work in a school. The success of those efforts can be seen as clear markers of improvement using both the hard indicators of external examination results and the softer markers of a change in school culture and approach. Evidence from the hard indicators of external examination results show that the overall level of achievement in the KS3 and 4 results over the last five years have improved. Some of this improvement is due to the strategies and initiatives now in place in the school’s systems. The research shows clearly how it is possible to integrate and use effectively two fields and a paradigm in a whole school improvement process. I have held Propositional and Dialectical Logics together simultaneously and successfully in the process of school and personal improvement. I have shown how a school, given the appropriate leadership and encouragement, can bring about collective improvement both of the pupils and the quality of teaching by the staff. I have also influenced some of the teaching staff to develop the confidence, autonomy, and motivation to work collaboratively with other colleagues, leading to personal and professional development and a richer educational environment.

Question 8 - What the research has achieved – My claims

- **The school has developed in Stoll’s (1999) terms a sustained ‘*internal capacity*’.**
- **It is now a ‘*moving*’ and ‘*learning*’ school.**
- **Action Research is established and embedded as a mechanism for moving the school forwards.**
- **Professional development and collegiality are now firmly embedded in the learning environment of the school.**

- It has undergone a change from a professional but very closed and conservative learning environment to an open one that accepts initiatives and innovation.
- The school now *'seeks connectedness'* (Stoll 1999b) in its development and improvement activities.
- Extensive learning has been achieved by myself and integrated into the practice of the school.
- I have achieved an explication of my living educational theory.
- I have firmly established myself as the 'centre of the wheel' for professional development and Action Research.
- Staff have accepted and embraced the concept of 'Teacher Learning'.
- A collegiate and open teaching regime is now in place.
- Advice and peer mentoring of teaching staff is now the norm.
- Pupil voices are now encouraged as an integral part of school developments and perhaps more importantly their views are readily used as a matter of policy.
- The school's performance as measured by external indicators has improved.

Conclusions

My research has proved to be a valuable source of data for school development. It has been a long, hard and sometimes painful process littered with false starts, failures and blockages. It has achieved the educational environment change that was necessary for the school to continue to fulfil its mission statement, *'a school to which others aspire'*. In this year 2002, the school has become a focus for its implementation of a radical curriculum initiative, sponsored and encouraged by the Royal Society of Arts. It has achieved national acclaim and interest and is the feature of academic papers and research both nationally and internationally. The staff are motivated and have a positive approach to the process of lifelong learning. They contribute and are receptive to the learning process for themselves and their pupils. I have been able to articulate my living educational theory, I feel fulfilled academically and I continue to offer what help and advice I can as an educator and Professional Development Manager.

The future

The final part of this chapter is a look into the future. Perhaps to suggest a model of teaching and learning that may satisfy the needs of all the individuals involved in the

educative process, the pupils, the teachers, the parents and the school. The 'learning school' will be constantly striving for improvement, and as the action cycle continues to turn, so there will be constant evaluation and re-evaluation of what is taking place. The position of the teacher and the pupil will continue to be central to that process.

From my teacher perspective, there can only be one way forward. Teachers must adopt the mantle of the professional more rigorously. Darling-Hammond and Goodwin (1993) stress clearly the need for teachers to fully embrace all that being a professional entails.

Anderson (1962:140) notes:

Teaching has long been numbered among the professional occupations....[Yet] teaching has developed the characteristic features of a profession very slowly and is still in the process of achieving equal status with other professions.

Goodlad (1990) defines teaching as '*the not quite profession*' and until this situation is resolved the status and morale of teachers will continue to be lower than the position enjoyed by teachers in other cultures. If morale can be raised, expectation, motivation and enthusiasm will follow. If these are in place, then the will to drive up performance and bring about improvement will also take a more prominent place in the education process. My suggested model is to create an educative culture where the teacher professional is recognised for the value he or she brings to education. Where educational research is part of every day practice and an integral part of the individual and department practice. Action Research on an individual and large whole school basis could be a way forward. It is essential that data be constantly produced on the process of teaching and learning if progress is to be made. There is little hope of improvement unless current practice is evaluated against measurable hard indicators. If that information is available, then there is a firm base from which to make sound value judgements and move forward to better end points in the future. Lomax (1999) suggests that the world of education must have a dialectic '*of improvement*'. As part of this dialectic, there has to be a healthy exchange of ideas, initiatives and practice between teachers and between teachers and pupils. Rudduck (1995) sees the principles of shared values and Griffiths (1992) endorses the need for these ethical values to underpin the process. There continues to be a need for a rigorous challenge to educational research on whatever scale to convince both the educational and academic world of its values, and to endorse the importance of it in the school improvement process. Donmoyer (1996) discussed earlier in the thesis, raises the issue of '*balkanisation*'. The difficulty that some members of the academic educational research world have of accepting as valuable the concept that differing forms of action and other

research methodologies bring to the knowledge base. It is, in my opinion, imperative that the research world accepts differing methodologies in order that 'hands on' practice in the classroom can be described and explained effectively. Teachers must feel free and be able to write in their own styles, with the appropriate research safeguards, exactly what is happening in the classroom. It is only then that pupil-orientated progress will be made. I agree with McIntyre (1990) when he adopted the standpoint for an environment where educational researchers can disagree with each other and where different stances can be maintained. In that sort of environment only the strongest and most valid theories can survive. Public scrutiny and validation are components that should be healthily in place. If this is the case, then we will have in education a society of people described as a community where, as described by Pring (1994) '*Diverse others were invited into the house and made to feel at home and not left to press their noses against the window*'. Educational research will play a central role in my model for the future. I do not totally support the notion suggested by Barber (1997) of teachers having to take an M.O.T in teaching pedagogy every five years to maintain and review their teaching skills, but I do support a change in outlook for teachers. That change is a need to listen to the pupils (Fielding 2001) and with an open mind, act upon what they hear. They need the skills to undertake that change and a willingness to confront the problems associated with change management. If those needs are identified, appropriate training put in place, appropriate funding allocated and methodology shared, school improvement will take place.

How will we recognise this new model of education?

The increasing number of educationalists who are attempting to create their own living educational theories and who are gaining academic acceptance for those theories will be the proof of success. As we add to propositional logic the realm of dialogical narrative, the power of living educational theory as it describes the work of teachers in the classroom will liberate thought and action. I would like to think that a move from the established propositional theory form of Argyris and Schön (1995) will enhance the understanding and explanation processes.

I want to argue for the less safe and more difficult dialectical format for the creation of educational theory. My thesis has been a dialogue with others and myself as I try to answer the question of '*how can I as an educator and Professional Development Manager working with my colleagues bring about school improvement?*' The emphasis has been very much on the '*working with my colleagues*' as a major component in the process. The

living educational theory that emerged has been a cumulative collection of results from educational practice with teachers and pupils in the classroom. The model that I am suggesting has been achieved through dialogical and propositional means and fulfils the vision of the '*critical learning of the future*' created by Young (1998). This vision of the future totally supports the St John's School mission statement in its endeavours to be a '*beacon of excellence*' and a centre for the concept of lifelong learning. My final note is to recognise Elliott's (1998) work on the concept of the curriculum as an innovative pedagogical experiment. This concept allows freedom for the teacher to use what needs to happen in the classroom to his best advantage, as a tool for the teaching and learning process, and as a focus for classroom based research.

I present my living educational theory as an attempt to describe and explain my practice as an educator for teachers and pupils as I strive to improve performance in my school. The future of the process for me is important. As the action cycle continues to revolve, so the school and I must revolve and evolve with it. In the field of educational academia I have made a contribution to the knowledge of a teacher in a school at work on a day-to-day basis. I conclude with the hope that the experiences that I have both received and given to others, contributes to the greater knowledge of how real education works.

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How can I as an educator and Professional Development Manager working with teachers, support and enhance the learning and achievement of pupils in a whole school improvement process?

Submitted by Michael Anthony Boshier

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Appendices

Appendix 1

An Historical Perspective of School Effectiveness and School Improvement

Edmonds (1978: 42) with a criticism of the education system wrote:

How many effective schools would you have to see to be persuaded of the educability of all children?....We already know more than we need to do that. Whether or not we do it, must depend on how we feel about the fact that we haven't so far.

Edmonds (1978: *ibid.*) goes on to say that it is a statement of fact that generally '***School achievement still lags far behind society's expectations***'. Blunkett (1997: 7), encapsulated a more positive vision for the C21st when he said:

If we have horizons and visions of a comprehensive system built on the foundations of a primary sector that offers excellence to every child, that meets the standards which we set for 11 year olds, that ensures that the basic skills, the tools for learning, of being able to read and write and to be numerate are there for every child – then they can flourish and become creative in their own right. The child who cannot read cannot learn; the child who cannot learn cannot flourish in a creative world of the new century.

Each and every school needs to be effective in its operation if it is to achieve Blunkett's ideal. What does effective mean? In the traditional interpretation of the phrase, it means 'does the school make a difference to a pupil's education?'

The search for the answer to this question started in earnest in the 1960s. The idea of judging a school's performance was started in America under the instigation of the then President, Lyndon Johnson. In an effort to raise educational standards, Johnson initiated a campaign on '*war on poverty*'. He was concerned that the poor of the American nation were not receiving the quality of education required to lift them out of the poverty trap. He set a number of educational research projects in motion to evaluate the situation, and the school effectiveness movement began.

The American Educational Research Association (AERA) together with a number of American Universities started to focus their activities in this area, and by the end of the 60s the American education system began to take notice of the evidence from these research findings. Coleman (1966: 79) made a statement that caused controversy and comment.

A study which had set out to document for Congress inequalities in school resources and facilities, so that remedial legislation could be drafted, ended up by

concluding not only that resource and facility differences between black and white schools within geographic regions were not large, but further that resources and facilities didn't appear to make much difference to student achievement once home background factors were taken into account.

In essence Coleman was saying that school differences accounted for only a small percentage of the differences in pupil attainment. This was seized upon by the press of the time who interpreted it as 'schools and teachers make no difference'. It is the family and the environment in which the children live which has the major effect on their attainment and accounts for their difference in performance. This provoked huge debate and the report's research methodology was questioned, but at least it focussed attention on this area of education. Jencks (1972) supported Coleman (1966: 79) although he judged by different criteria.

The equalisation of school resources would not make students appreciably more equal after they finish school, the most important determinant of educational attainment was family background.

This study was also criticised for being too narrow in its outlook, but again focussed research into the relationship between school and outcomes.

Bernstein (1970:43) also supported the view that '*Education cannot compensate for society*'. To counter this rather negative view, Edmonds (1978) researched into the differences in school performance between what appeared similar schools in the homogeneous community of Harlem New York City; homogeneous in terms of pupil make up, culture, socio-economic background and educational aspiration. He had a commitment to reducing racial inequality and improving the educational opportunities available, and his 'five factor theory' of effective schools was the starting point for extensive research in the future. His five factor correlates for effective schools were:

- emphasis on student acquisition of basic skills;
- high expectations for students;
- strong administrative leadership;
- frequent monitoring of student progress;
- orderly climate conducive to learning.

Levine and Lezotte (1990) then built upon these correlates and subsequent research has embellished this original work. This is the opposite side of the coin, an early indication that schools can change pupils.

At the same time in England, the Plowden Report (1967) was making the same assertions about the home environment. If, as was argued at the time, the school only had a small part to play in the education of the child, then the part that it did play was to provide a curriculum that suited the needs of that child. To this end, much of the educational initiative of the 60s was centred round the focus of curriculum provision. The adoption of exemplar material produced from external sources was considered to be the way to raise pupil achievement. Its downfall was, that on the whole this resource material production did not involve teachers in classrooms. Hopkins (1987a) notes that the Schools Council Curriculum Project did address this issue in part, but did not make the bold step of linking teaching style with curriculum development.

The Seventies was a time for a review of what had occurred before. During this review, recognition of the failure of these externally imposed curriculum reforms was made. It was because of their lack of success in bringing about a change of classroom practice that failure occurred; again a realisation that teachers have to be involved in the process if change is to be brought about. Additionally much of that change needs to be in the styles and strategies of teaching, not just what is being taught.

In the early seventies, Webber (1971) started to look at what made some schools different to others, and other researchers looked at, as Silver (1994:34) put it “*Exemplary schools*’, or ‘*unusually effective schools*’, or ‘*effective schools*’”. It was during the 1970s and 1980s that the concept of the school making a difference to a child’s education became more accepted. Bookover *et al* (1979) supported the concept that schools could make a difference to a child’s attainment. This in essence contradicted the earlier views referred to by Coleman that the effects of the home and family background outweigh the effects that the school can have.

Biddle, Good and Brophy (1975) took the then unusual step of looking at teachers as the focus of effectiveness. Reynolds (1976a) started work in England on ‘School Difference Research’. His findings met with initial hostility when he published his findings in an article in the New Society Journal. His work was continued by Edmonds (1978) who identified factors of effective schools that he found made a difference to performance and achievement. The first major study in England was by Rutter *et al* (1979) in ‘*Fifteen Thousand Hours*’, this also met with hostility (Goldstein [1980]), but continued to refine the identifiable factors that differentiated the effectiveness of one school over another, and

therefore affected the achievement of its pupils. One interesting factor that Rutter considered was the matching of individual pupil data at intake and again at sixteen. A process that St John's is involved in twenty years later. Reynolds (1985) also produced a study on school effectiveness and from these studies it became clear that schools were different from each other and that there were identifiable factors that made some schools more effective than others. In addition to the factors noted by Rutter *et al* (1979), Purkey and Smith (1985) produced eight criteria that their research showed represented factors characteristic of effective schools. These factors were organisational in content and are listed in Hopkins *et al* (1994:45) as:

1. ***Curriculum focussed school leadership.***
2. ***Supportive climate within the school.***
3. ***Emphasis on curriculum and teaching.***
4. ***Clear goals and high expectations for students.***
5. ***A clear system for monitoring performance and achievement.***
6. ***On-going staff development and in service.***
7. ***Parental involvement and support.***
8. ***LEA and external support.***

It is interesting to note here that the pupils themselves do not get a specific mention although they are implicitly involved in the effectiveness strategies as the recipients. I suspect this is because school effectiveness as mentioned earlier is focussed on the improvement of processes not on the individuals within those processes. Fullan (1985) added some '*process factors*' to this list and Mortimore *et al* (1988) during their work in London primary schools basically confirmed the factors already identified by Rutter in the secondary sector. HMI (1988) also confirmed and broadly agreed with these. Levine and Lezotte (1990) and Levine (1992) complemented the organisational factors of Purkey and Smith, but like Fullan, he was anxious that the process behind the criteria is of vital importance also. He said about the lists given to improve effectiveness, and I misquote but give the flavour, '*it's an interesting place to be but I have no idea how to get there*'. (Hindsight now gives us the wisdom to see that school improvement activities are the way forward). As a consequence he offered nine guidelines from his research on effective schools that would help the emerging effective school to achieve its operation targets. These are quoted in Hopkins *et al* (1994:64) as:

1. ***Substantial staff development time must be provided; at least in part, during the teacher's regular workday.***
2. ***Groups of staff engaged in effective schools projects must not wait very long before beginning to address issues involving improving the quality of teaching.***
3. ***Conversely, staff embarking in an effective schools project must avoid getting bogged down in elaborate schemes to train all staff in the details of a particular teaching technique or approach at the beginning of the project.***

4. *Priorities for development must be sharply focussed and few in number, in order to avoid teacher and school overload.*
5. *The success of changes in teaching practice is also dependent on parallel changes in the conditions within the school, which support it.*
6. *Significant support (for example, consultancy or advisory teachers) must be made available to staff participating in effective schools projects. Effective schools projects should be 'data driven' in the sense that appropriate information from evaluation should guide participants in preparing and carrying out plans for improvement.*
7. *Effective schools projects must avoid reliance on bureaucratic implementation stressing form, check lists and 'quick fix' remedies rigidly applied in participating schools and classrooms.*
8. *Effective schools projects should seek out and consider using materials, methods and approaches that have been successful elsewhere.*
9. *The success of an effective schools project depends on a judicious mixture of autonomy within the school and a measure of directiveness from outside.*

One of the difficulties that was noted by researchers during this time was the problem of gaining access to schools to gather initial data. The onset of Grant Maintained Status for schools during the eighties made this access more easily obtained and therefore data much more available and useable. The other research difficulty prevalent at the time was the absence of reliable and valid measures of school institutional climate. With the easier access, these measures have now been researched more thoroughly and a base of data is now available for current research to use as a starting platform.

An analysis of the literature so far shows little or no involvement with, and in schools, or with teachers in classrooms. The research is done on schools, not with them, and gives the impression of a top down approach with large-scale panaceas in the form of technocratic intervention with the assumption of improvement being certain if the necessary processes were in place.

Prolific large-scale research was undertaken in this era by Crandall *et al* (1982&1986), Huberman and Miles (1984), Hargreaves (1984), Rosenholtz (1989), Louis and Miles (1990) and Wilson and Corcoran (1988). The outcomes of this research adding strength to the increasing bank of knowledge of factors and characteristics that makes an effective school. Other research of the period looked at the effects that schools can have on academic achievement. A landmark study of note at this time was that by Smith and Tomlinson (1989), whose area of study on examination results, identified large differences in academic effectiveness between schools that appeared to have similar pupils after allowance had been made for intake quality. Other studies in this area include Gray (1981), Reynolds *et al* (1987), Nuttall *et al* (1989), Gray (1990) and Cuttance (1992). This group

of researchers identified that there were '*differential differences*' between schools, but on closer examination there were identifiable differential differences within each school and amongst individual pupils. This concept is still of great importance today and schools need to address the problem associated with this by internal research on differential effectiveness. To a limited extent, my work on Mathematics set results in **Appendix 10** is part of that process.

During the 1980s, accountability of schools to parents, LEAs and the Government was becoming a major issue that had to be addressed. In this era, the effective schools research movement as noted in Hopkins *et al* (1994: 45):

Made it very clear that it defines effectiveness in terms of the differences in student outcomes (on a variety of measures, not simply standardised tests of basic skills) that schools achieve after full account has been taken of the pupil's prior learning history and family background at the time he or she enters school.

It was at this time that the fields of school effectiveness and school improvement were starting to merge, and the first joint congress in Cardiff took place. This is discussed in depth later in the chapter. School improvement and school effectiveness have to be part and parcel of the process whereby the school attempts to raise achievement. They cannot be separate as each has an integral role to play in the overall process. Reynolds (1992: 1) recognises the part that schools play:

While home background and individual capability are still recognised as major factors in children's achievement – schools do make a difference and about 15% of the variance is due to the school. A school does not necessarily remain effective from year to year without sustained efforts from the Head and staff.

The School Effectiveness movement continued into the 90s spreading its sphere of interest and research with work into conceptualising the nature of '*the school*' and classroom processes within ineffective schools; (Reynolds 1991a), and Reynolds *et al*, 1996). Internationally, work continues to be extensive in both the School Improvement and School Effectiveness movements. As indicated earlier, work in America on school effectiveness started in the 1960s although it was towards the late 1970s that the real base of knowledge was established. Research from Bookover *et al* (1979) and Edmonds (1978) started the movement. The work in the classroom with the emphasis on the teacher and the pupils and what is happening during the educational experience in that classroom is a central part of this thesis. Silberman (1971: 364) observes:

If schooling is going to make sense to children, let alone appeal to them, we must assume certain responsibilities. Firstly, we should carefully examine the

experiences that students undergo. The examination of experiences which result from institutional aspects of school life is especially urgent because they have received superficial study up 'til now'. Second, we must make a conscious decision to alter conditions that create undesirable experiences. Third, we must communicate clearly to students the goals and expectations we believe make sense. And, fourth, we should affirm the right of students to negotiate our purposes and demands so that the activities we undertake with them have greatest possible meaning of all.

This quotation is important because it indicated and confirmed the direction of the next move. That is, the recognition that the process of pupil consultation and involvement, and focus on what was happening in the classroom with pupil learning was crucial to improvement in the effectiveness of the school.

Moving into the 1980s, Hallinger and Murphy (1986) working on factors that promote effective schools, and Rosenholtz's (1989) work on '*stuck or moving schools*' added significantly to the research base. Susan Rozenholtz's work on the creation of an appropriate culture within a school so that improvement starts '*from within*', to use Barth's (1990:85) expression was important. Rosenholtz in Hopkins *et al* (1994:85) talks of a '*learning enriched school*', '*Where the excitement and motivation of learning is a full part of the daily lives of both students and teachers*'. The 1990s brought further significant work in the area. Levine and Lezotte (1990) produced the 5-factor model of school effectiveness relating to pupil achievement based on the pupils' test achievements on basic skills in literacy. They pointed out that school improvement has to be data driven in as much as such information can be useful in guiding improvement plans for the future. Teddlie and Stringfield (1993) used both quantitative and qualitative data depending on what they deemed as the most appropriate in their multiple data gathering research methodology. This was quite a breakthrough, as historically the school effectiveness field tended to use quantitative data. More recently, it has been the school improvement field that favours qualitative data.

Australia and Scandinavia who were early members of the effectiveness movement also added to the knowledge base during the 90s. In the Netherlands, the Dutch have been particularly keen to explore instructional practices in the classroom and Creemers *et al* (1994), have utilised large sample sizes in their research in contrast to the rather limited numbers and representative samples of the British research. Reynolds (1995:61) records that the:

The Dutch have begun to attempt to generate some middle range theoretical models that can begin to causally order the school/classroom variables and which can act both as a guide to entrants to the field and as a codification of knowledge that makes it more accessible and ultimately understandable by practitioners than the frankly more grubby empiricism of purely statistical approaches. (Creemers and Scheerens 1989).

An interest for me from the Reynolds *et al* (1996 b: 138) paper was that they note three areas of positive strength of research in school effectiveness.

***High levels of methodological sophistication, in which the utilisation of a cohort design, matched data on individuals at intake and outcome and multiple level methodologies are now widely agreed as best practice.
The use of multiple measures of pupil outcomes.
The use of multiple measures of pupil intakes into school using prior achievement as well as numerous other factors.***

A downside noted in the same paper indicates that much of the research done to date has been with schools and classrooms from socially deprived areas and it notes that the data achieved may not therefore be as universally applicable as it might be. Reynolds (1995:67) notes about ineffective schools:

School effectiveness researchers often lose these schools and the knowledge that they could furnish us with, because they fail to participate in our research through dropping out. Besides, people like me have implicitly 'back mapped' the characteristic of the effective school onto the ineffective school, thinking that what the ineffective school has is an absence of the things that made the effective school effective. We have not entertained the possibility that the ineffective school itself has factors that are unknown in the effective schools which require distinctive approaches.

Reynolds process of 'simple back mapping' is an interesting concept. He points out that it is not possible to make a direct link between an effective school and one that is not because the culture, ethos and personalities of all schools are different, these attributes are not directly transferable. A further step is possible in that the effective actions from school A are researched, evaluated and recorded. The results of this research can then be made known to school B. School B could then amend the practices, trial them and after evaluation of the trial make a decision on how effective the processes are in this second school. Barth's (1990) concept of 'change from within' is confirmed again here. Schools have to be at the centre of their own change, not have a bolt on solution from another school.

All schools have effective and ineffective teachers, pupils, departments and managers. The need for a multi-dimensional appraisal of what is good and less good in a school and what

makes it so is vitally important is needed if a move to a raising of standards is to be achieved. To that end factors that contribute to the ineffective school may also be valuable to me. This may sound a little obtuse, but if I can identify ineffective or inefficient practice then I can possibly by the reverse of the process described above make use of that data as a manager in an attempt to prevent such activity at St John's.

Where did the School Improvement Movement begin?

Historically it began to emerge in the 1980s. Reynolds *et al* (1996: 143) note:

..the lack of any close links or 'synergy' between British school effectiveness research and British school improvement practice is one of our notable legacies. The school improvement enterprise within the United Kingdom began to emerge within the 'teacher as a researcher movement' (Elliott 1980 and 1981 b).

This movement began to be recognised as a potent and desirable means of examining the educational process taking place in schools. The realisation that what happens in the classroom between teachers and pupils and evaluations of those activities and processes (Clift and Nuttall 1987), should be the focus of attention for educational research, then began to gather momentum. The Hargreaves Report on *Improving Secondary Schools* (1984), the *Guidelines for Review and Institutional Development in Schools* (McMahon *et al*, 1984) and the British activities of the **International School Improvement Project (ISIP)** co-ordinated by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (Hopkins, 1987 b) were significant contributions to the movement. The thrust of this project was to develop strategies for school improvement, and used case studies in its approach. Its stated definition of school improvement as noted by Van Velzen *et al* (1985:48) was:

A systematic, sustained effort aimed at change in learning conditions and other related internal conditions in one or more schools, with the ultimate aim of accomplishing educational goals more effectively.

It generally accepted the bottom up approach, recognising the practical knowledge of the teacher as the practitioner. The project was based on the following assumptions:

1. The school was at the centre of change. This meant that any external reforms needed to be sensitive to the situations in each individual school rather than assuming that all schools were the same. It also implied that any improvement effort needed to '*adopt a classroom-exceeding perspective, without ignoring the classroom*'.

2. It also assumed that there was a systematic approach to any change and that it was planned and managed and would take place over a number of years. One of the key focuses of the project was the internal condition in the school. This identified not only the teacher learner activities, but also the planned use of resources to support those activities and the allocation of roles within the school. This key focus emphasised the move towards recognising the importance of the teacher, the pupils and the classroom. If this were recognised, then teaching style and learning style would become of crucial importance.

3. This then helped in the next assumption i.e. that the school could accomplish educational goals more effectively. This became broader than just pupil performance. It embraced the professional development of the teacher, the needs of the community and gave the school a more central role in society. If it was more centralised then it was forced to work collaboratively with others in that society. Reynolds *et al* (1992: 42) support the notion of collaboration:

The school is embedded in an educational system that has to work collaboratively or symbiotically if the highest degrees of quality are to be achieved. This means that the roles of teachers, heads, governors, parents, support people (advisers, higher education consultants etc), and the local authorities should be defined, harnessed and committed to the process of school improvement.

4. It went on to assume that there was an integrative implementation strategy. This meant that a top down and bottom up approach was employed at different levels in the system. This enabled the proper formulation of policy, resourcing and action at classroom level in improvement activities.

5. Finally it assumed that there was a drive towards institutionalisation of any change.

Reynolds *et al* (1992:ibid.) '*Change is only successful when it becomes part of the natural behaviour of all those in the school. Implementation by itself is not enough*'.

The ISIP project formally ended in 1986 and provided a sound research base of knowledge from which the movement grew. It continued its work under the umbrella of the Foundation for International Collaboration on School Improvement (FICSI) and this provided a means of organising conferences, meetings and workshops at the American Educational Research Association (AERA) annual meetings. It also did a similar thing at the International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement (ICSEI). In 1992, at the FICSI, Reynolds *et al* (1996) reports that they:

Decided it would be useful to make formal links with other networks, and the resulting connection with ICSEI made it possible to bring together for the first time two different ways of approaching the phenomenon of creating more effective schools. Involving on the one hand the research knowledge on

effectiveness and on the other hand the practical and research knowledge about school improvement. The resulting symposium at ICSEI '93 led to a conference in Cardiff in which participants decided to lay out the outcomes of the meeting in a publication, in which basic ideas and concepts about school improvement would be linked to the knowledge we have about school effectiveness.

Another consortium the British Economic and Social Research Council funded a symposium for over 30 key individuals in the fields to take stock of the achievements and challenges of bringing the two fields together and the results are edited and reported by Gray *et al* (1996).

To date (2001) there are now many programmes of research being undertaken, which have included important research such as the Improving The Quality Of Education For All (IQEA) project of Hopkins *et al* (1994), the Lewisham School Improvement project and the Hammersmith and Fulham '*Schools make a Difference*' Project in 1993.

The IQEA project works from the assumption that if schools can identify their own needs and adapt or change their systems of working, they are likely to produce improved outcomes for their pupils. They must also of course take into consideration the current educational reform agenda. If this internalisation of need is undertaken and ownership gained by both the staff and the pupils in the school then the school can move forwards without having to rely on external agencies and externally produced educational packages. Hopkins *et al* (1994:7) recognises the value of external influences impacting on internal strategies for change, '*At a time of great change in the educational system, the schools we are working with are using the impetus of external reform for internal purposes*'. As part of this project, the collaborative enterprise between the research team and the schools involved has strengthened their ability to manage change, enhance the work of the teachers and as a result improve the broadly defined outcomes of the students. The schools in this position of change management fit into Rosenholtz's (1989) definition of 'moving schools'.

The five principles of IQEA as recognised by Hopkins *et al* (1994: 102) are:

- 1. The vision of the school (school in the future) should be one to which all members of the school community have an opportunity to contribute, and most will seek to.***
- 2. The school, because it has its vision, will see in external pressures for change important opportunities to secure its internal priorities.***
- 3. The school will seek to create and maintain conditions in which all members of the school community can learn successfully.***
- 4. The school will seek to adopt and develop structures that encourage collaboration and lead to the empowerment of individuals and groups.***

5. *The school will seek to promote the view that the monitoring and evaluation of quality is a responsibility in which all members of staff share.*

The project schools have a clear line of involvement from the top to the bottom of the school. Development is encouraged and initiated at all levels from general whole school systems through to departments and down to including the teachers and the pupils in the classroom. This whole school approach must come from the imaginative leadership of the Headteacher who has the confidence to manage in Caldwell and Spinks's (1988) terms a collaborative '*self-managing school*'. In 1977 a DES report stated what all '*good schools*':

...have in common is effective leadership and a 'climate' that is conducive to growth....Emphasis is laid down on consultation, team work and participation, but without exception, the most important single factor in the success of these schools is the quality of leadership of the head.

Since that statement was written, thoughts on the qualities of the Headteacher have moved on. It is more than just being a good head. The type of leadership is also important. The concept of transformational leadership that places the emphasis on process, shared vision, school culture and energising participation is now crucial. The values of leadership are further addressed in Chapter 9. This process must not just rest with the leadership of the Headteacher however. While this is of vital importance, and must engage with the Holly and Southworth (1989) concept that the '*Headteacher is the leading learner*', the school has to be more than this. The concept of a teacher-researcher recording classroom activity, sharing practice and learning with colleagues will also be of considerable benefit. In the '*learning school*' Holly and Southworth (1989) quote Stenhouse (1975:53) who says '*there can be no curriculum development without teacher development*'.

So in their terms:

'a learning school is a developing school'. A learning school being characterised by five levels of learning, children's learning, teacher learning, staff learning, organisational learning and leadership learning.

If the school can create an ethos and culture where the inhabitants can learn from each other then improvement is more likely to happen. The collaborative culture in school as supported by Nias (1989), Little (1990), Hargreaves, A. (1991,1992,1993) and Rosenholtz (1985) all make it clear that those schools which are going to develop and move do not isolate their teachers, but actively encourage professional dialogue between them. Thus the ethos, culture and atmosphere set by the school at classroom level must also be appropriately encouraging. If this is the case then improvement and development opportunities will be optimised, and this type of environment will have a significant roll over effect into the process of learning in the classroom. I recognise the need for caution in

taking this stance. Just getting the factors right does not guarantee improvement or that it will work for all pupils. The school improvement field at this time did not recognise the part to be played by pupils. The work of Thiessen (1997), Southworth and Lincoln (1999), and Fielding (2001) using children as *'radical agents of change'* has now become an important factor. Additionally, I also recognise that for sustained improvement to take place, any research has to be done 'with' the pupils not 'on' them. As noted earlier, Reynolds *et al* (1987) also point out the occurrence of differential improvement of effectiveness both in schools and between schools so the improvement process is not as technicist and simplistic as it appears at first sight

Again to contextualise the work of this thesis, of the 58 projects listed in the Reynolds 1996 paper, not one individual school is noted. This again adds credence to the uniqueness of the study I am undertaking. Most are large-scale projects being undertaken by Universities or Local Education Authorities. In the conclusion to the Reynolds paper, there is a recommendation that future research should take case studies from schools and analyse how they are improving and why. I am part of that process, working at classroom level in one school looking at practice in an attempt to add to the database of school effectiveness and school improvement knowledge.

What does improvement mean?

There are two interpretations:

1. The normal interpretation is the school's general effort to make the school a better place for the pupils to learn in.
2. The second interpretation is a subtler one. That is that as Hopkins *et al* (1994:3) state:

We regard school improvement as a distinct approach to educational change that enhances student outcomes as well as strengthening the school's capacity for managing change.

This is an important concept, it confirms that in such schools, learning is taking place for the pupils, the organisation itself and the teachers in it. If we have developed this capacity to manage any change, then the possibility of sustaining the improvement developments is greatly increased. In such a school it is possible for the teacher to make mistakes as long as something is learnt from those mistakes. It is important that all members of the school community can be seen to and feel that they are learning together. As teachers, we allow pupils to make mistakes and learn from them. This is an important part of the educative

process. Now we are in a situation where it is allowable to give teachers the same freedom. This is the point at which the appropriate management style is important, a style that can manage the culture of such development. Additionally, the power and weight of pupil voice and opinion must be an integral part of this learning school. Rudduck et al (1996: 4) observe:

A scrutiny of the various lists (and the aggregated summaries) of factor that, it is claimed, make a difference to school effectiveness leads us to make similar comments: pupils figure in these maps of concern as the ultimate beneficiaries but they do not feature among the people who might help to construct an analysis of the situation as a basis for determining strategy and helping to monitor its appropriateness.

Schools must give the pupil body a voice. The move to include pupils is supported by Nieto (1994) whose research confirms pupil abilities in '*depth of analysis and awareness*'. It would in my opinion seem foolhardy not to include them. In his work at Sharnbrook School with his pupils, Fielding (2001:6) makes the following statement about their contributions:

What we have here is a concrete instantiation of what I have elsewhere called 'radical collegiality' (Fielding 1999), a collegiality constitutive of a professionalism commensurate with the move towards a more dialogic form of democracy. Here teachers learn not only with and from each other, from parents and from their community, but also, and more particularly, from their students.

This embraces a very definitive advocate of the power and importance of the pupil voice and contribution. This work is complementing the earlier work of Pollard, Thiessen and Filer (1997) and Thiessen (1997) each recognising that work with pupils can take three forms. Working '*with pupil perspectives, learning about pupils and acting on behalf of pupils*'. Fielding (2001) working with Thiessen's '*working with pupil perspectives*' developed his ideas for '*students as the radical agents for change*'. The learning school where teachers are taking part in the life long learning process is a sign that the culture of the school is changing and is supported by the work of both Rosenholtz (1989) and Barth (1990) and fully in line with the research of the IQEA project. St John's as a school has embraced this philosophy using the opinions of pupils as an important source of both data and strength of feeling. In 2001 we are now investigating the use of pupils' multiple intelligences, and are actively encouraging the pupils' voices to inform our improvement processes.

This second Hopkins interpretation fits well in my opinion, with the work being undertaken at St John's. We are making a concerted effort to raise achievement and the

sample of initiatives documented in Chapter 6 and 7 will outline these. At the same time, the staff and the school have to come to terms with a change of structure, ethos, outlook, management style and teaching strategies in order to bring about this improvement process. The management of change is discussed further in Chapter 9. Suffice it just to register here that in the early days of school improvement, actions revolved around 'lists' of things that should be in place. It considered that management was the only key to improvement. While the importance of management was to be recognised, the work of Nias (1989) and Rosenholtz (1989) on ethos and culture added more to this dimensional arena.

A synergy of the two fields

The late 1980s, early 1990s became a time for a synergy of the School Effectiveness and School Improvement fields, of reconciliation and a concerted and co-operative move forwards of the two movements as the Simon and Garfunkel (1970) song goes: *A Bridge over Troubled Waters*. It is also a time of great change. Change in thinking, in approach and in rationale.

Between the start of the 90s and the end of the decade dramatic change has taken place. Hopkins *et al* (1994) make the point that the strategies, language and initiatives employed now would have been inconceivable in 1990. It has all become much more sophisticated and precise and Hopkins *et al* consider that the '*sea change*' taking place in schools is arguably more profound than the 'Comprehensive Movement' of the 60s.

The two fields of School Effectiveness and School Improvement have only recently become amiable bedfellows. For many years, the two fields have been far apart with different philosophical starting points and backgrounds. Reynolds *et al* (1996a: 139) note a disadvantage of the lack of synergy between the School Effectiveness field and the School Improvement field:

The historic lack of any interface between school effectiveness research and school improvement practice, reflecting the very different intellectual ancestries of the two paradigms... Whilst this situation has begun to change considerably in recent years, historically there has been little of the take up of effectiveness knowledge into British improvement programmes that have been so evident in the United States. Neither in the United Kingdom has there been more than partial take up of the insights for the school improvement programmes into school effectiveness research designs.

It is now time for them to become one, to shake off the animosity of methodological infighting and combine to produce a dynamic base from which teachers can build on the concept of raising the achievement of their pupils. If schools are to improve then the answer will lie in the hands of each school as a unique place of learning. There is no master blue print of how to do it. Cuban (1984: 1) stated:

Unlike the way things happen in fairy tales, school reforms require more than a kiss to convert a frog into a shining prince. Furthermore, productive schooling entails more than raising test scores. No one knows how to grow effective schools. Road signs exist, but no maps are yet for sale.

At the start of this enquiry, I intimated that part of the uniqueness of my approach is that I am looking at the problem from the teachers and pupils in the classroom up. That is, towards the larger organisations and processes in the school rather than the more conventional school effectiveness approach of the 'top down'. That is the imposition of change in approach or strategy coming from the Government through the Local Education Authority down to the processes and actions in the school. Hopkins *et al* (1994:2) views on this top down process note that:

The weaknesses of the traditional 'top down' approach to educational change are almost daily being exposed in our newspapers, and there is a growing recognition that neither centralisation nor de-centralisation works. None the less, we believe that schools can still enhance educational quality in spite of a heavily deterministic national agenda.

Schools are now committed to improving standards of teaching and learning, to raising pupil achievement and to managing the changing world that has been with education for many years. There are occasions when what the school does is in line with national ideas, and there are occasions when individual schools deviate from that path. However, the guiding principal for the school will always be that the change being brought about will be in the best interests of the pupils in that school.

As a framework for bridging the gap between the two fields and bringing about 'synergy' as Reynolds *et al* (1993) suggests, he provides a comparator table of characteristics of the two fields that contrasts their approaches.

Table 2a. Reynolds *et al* (1993:44)

School Effectiveness.	School Improvement
Focus on schools.	Focus on individual teachers or groups of teachers.

Focus on school organisation.

Focus on school process.

Data driven with emphasis on outcomes.

Rare empirical evaluation of the effects of change.

Quantitative in orientation.

Qualitative in orientation.

Lack of knowledge about how to implement change strategies.

Concerned with change in schools exclusively.

More concerned with change in pupil outcomes.

More concerned with journey of school improvement than its destination.

More concerned with schools at a point in time.

More concerned with schools as changing.

Based on research knowledge.

Focus on practitioner knowledge.

The emphasis of school effectiveness being on systems and outcomes, which are both academically and socially, orientated. School improvement comes from a different stance. This field is about *'developing strategies for change that strengthens the school's organisation, as well as implementing curriculum reforms in the pursuit of student achievement'* (Reynolds *et al* 1993:42). To add to this, Reynolds *et al* also show how the school improvement field itself changed over time.

Table 2b. Characteristics of two School Improvement Fields: Reynolds *et al* (1993:41)

	1960s	1980s
Orientation	'top down'	'bottom up'
Knowledge base	elite knowledge	practitioner knowledge
Target	organisation or curriculum based	process based
Outcomes	pupil outcome orientated	school process orientated

Goals	outcomes as given	outcomes as problematic
Focus	school	teacher
Methodology of evaluation	quantitative	qualitative
Site	outside school	within school
Focus	part of school	whole school

Reynolds *et al* note in their paper that there has been a paradigmatic shift from the stance outlined in the 60s and 70s, above to that of the 1980s. Improvement at that time was characterised by an empirical top down approach or technological approach to school improvement. This positivistic approach was based on the 'outsider' researcher and focussed on the curriculum and the school's organisation. The outcomes of this proved to be less than successful, and during the 1980s a shift in approach took place. A new field of improvement developed which was 'bottom up' and was 'owned' by the people in the school who had initiated the changes. From the table above it can be seen how much more involved the individuals in the school could now be, and how much more likely the school would be able to identify with the changes. This links the work of Joyce *et al* (1983, 1988, &1992), Mortimore (1991), Stoll and Fink (1992) and Murphy (1992) all of whom in their own different areas of research are linking teacher orientated work with school processes like Development Planning. Reynolds *et al* (1993:46) cite the IQEA project as another example of the synergy. *'It is pupil outcome orientated, involves measurement of programme success or failure at outcome level but is also concerned with the within school study of school processes from a qualitative orientation'*. It looks like the 'bridge over troubled waters' is being strengthened all the time. The common sense pragmatic 'in school' approach to raising achievement has got to incorporate the elements of both fields if it is to be successful in its outcomes. Schools need the wisdom of the research of both movements, but collectively not separately. Weindling (1998) therefore suggests a series of school-based strategies and initiatives that incorporates both 'traditions'. They would include the following areas of work:

- *Use the research findings on effective schools and effective teaching.*
- *Gather school specific information e.g. conduct a needs assessment, and analyse student performance data.*
- *Foster staff development and collegiality e.g. through team teaching, peer coaching and 'Investors in people' (IiP).*

- ***Explore a variety of teaching methods e.g. the study of teaching skills, thinking skills and strategies such as co-operative and flexible learning.***
- ***Make effective use of a range of curricular initiatives – whole curricular (e.g. the National Curriculum), T.V.E.I and subject specific.***
- ***Improve relations with parents and employers e.g. by introducing parental involvement programmes and educational Business Partnerships and Compacts.***

The original idea of the School Effectiveness field being of lists and tables culled from research elsewhere, data being quantitative in nature and being imposed top down to schools with the naïve expectation of an improvement in achievement has now gone. The School Improvement field of looking at process, at relationships and a shared involvement in the activities of the school between all members of the partnership has now developed. Reynolds (1995: 65) suggests that pupils, teachers, parents and Governors growing and developing from the bottom up is the dominant feature of education today.

The recent evidence showing the power of the classroom level should also lead to a conceptualisation of the school and its processes that starts with pupil learning, socialisation, decision making at the lowest learning level, and then looks upwards to the class, and then higher to the school levels, to see what has been done to potentiate or hinder that learning, a very different ‘bottom up’ orientation to most current school effectiveness conceptualisations, that are ‘top down’.

The bridge has been built and the two fields are now working in relative harmony in the best interests of the most important members of that partnership, the pupils.

The current distillation of the school effectiveness and school improvement synergy is the production of a ‘knowledge base’ of factors, features and actions which contribute to the raising of achievement. This distillation by Reynolds *et al* (1996:141) suggests that the following are the essence of the improving school:

Professional Leadership: Three characteristics required, strength of purpose, sharing of leadership positions and the Headteacher adopting a role as the ‘leading professional’. (Sammons, Hillman & Mortimore 1995; Mortimore et al, 1988 and Rutter et al, 1979).

Shared visions and goals: Unity of purpose, consistency of practice, collaboration and collegiality. (Mortimore et al, 1988; Rutter et al, 1979 and Reynolds 1976 b).

A Learning Environment: The ethos of the school is partly determined by the vision, values and goals of the staff, together with the climate in which pupils work. (Mortimore et al, 1988; Rutter et al, 1979 and 1983).

High Quality teaching and learning: Maximising learning time, an academic emphasis and curriculum coverage that gives pupils higher opportunity to learn. (Mortimore et al, 1988; Rutter et al, 1979; Bennett, 1978; Alexander ,1992; Galton and Simon, 1982; Tizard et al,1988 and Smith and Tomlinson 1989).

High expectations: Are implicated in generating a more active role for teachers in helping pupils. supported by the work of Sammons, Hillman & Mortimore (1995), Tizard et al (1988), Mortimore et al (1988).

Positive reinforcement: Involving clear and fair discipline, Reynolds & Murgatroyd (1977), direct and positive feedback such as praise and appreciation, Rutter et al (1979).

Monitoring Pupil Progress: Well established mechanisms for monitoring the performance and progress of pupils, classes, the school as a whole and the efficacy of improvement programmes.(Mortimore et al, 1988; and Hargreaves and Hopkins 1991).

Pupils Rights and Responsibilities: An atmosphere where pupils enjoy this environment raises self-esteem and conveys in pupils' trust if they are given responsibilities. (Rutter et al, 1979; Smith and Tomlinson 1989).

Purposeful Teaching: Found to be greatly beneficial by Rutter et al (1979 and Mortimore et al (1988).

Many of these factors, my colleagues and myself are trying to achieve at St John's. Stoll (1999:2) brings the now single movement up to date. The emphasis of the teacher in the classroom with the pupils is where the united movement now finds itself. In her projection forwards she says:

As we approach the new millennium, there is a real need to gain a better understanding of student learning in relation to the twenty first century. First there must be a debate about the purpose of learning, given that we understand about a changed and changing world. In other words, improvement for what purpose?

If we really understand that question and the educational implications behind it, then how do we go about the process? Central to the answer to that question is the basis of my thesis. Stoll (1999:ibid.) again '*What interests teachers most is what goes on between them and the students in their class and classrooms*'. School improvement activities incorporating the school effectiveness approaches, as appropriate, will give the guide to how best to serve the needs of the pupils in the schools of the future.

An era of constant change

Where did this need for improvement come from? Hopkins *et al* (1994: 4) recognised that the need for schools to become more accountable started at the beginning of the 80s with a series of debates on educational standards.

In the UK as elsewhere, the change agenda has increasingly been set by national politicians, rather than being advocated by educationalists or support agencies.

With centralisation of educational reform, teachers have lost control over change.

This was followed by a series of state led initiatives which culminated in 1988 with the new Education Reform Act, with consolidation by other legislation in the 1990s. This legislation resulted in five 'top down' approaches that were radical in their outlook. Firstly *prescription* of what should be taught through the National Curriculum, and when that knowledge should be tested. Secondly *decentralisation* with the Local Education Authorities losing their power and control to the local management of schools by the governing bodies. Thirdly *competition* through the imposition of league tables caused schools to look very hard at their performances in the areas being reported upon. Fourthly the process of *privatisation* of service upon which the school can call for expert advice like staff development, and finally the school inspections process (OFSTED). Additionally the formation of Grant Maintained Schools and City Technology Colleges all added to the changing educational environment. This heralded the start of the centralisation versus decentralisation debate. The drive by the Government of the time made a concerted effort to institutionalise their reforms in the school arena. Hopkins *et al* (1994:5) recognised that the aim was to stabilise reform activity in schools in order to establish a stable platform from which improvement could be established.

This quest for stability, however, is being made against a background of continuing change, as expectations for student achievement rise beyond the capacity of the system to deliver. As a result, there are seemingly contradictory pressures for centralisation and decentralisation, yet it is clearly evident that neither approach works by itself.

The schools found that during the 90s, they were under pressure to achieve more, while their resources were diminished or withdrawn to centralised government. Nevertheless schools that cared about quality and achievement became involved in the school improvement process. The politics of the day have also impacted upon the arena of school improvement. Robinson (1997) is still arguing that to focus on factors that are beyond the school's control such as poverty and social inequality rather than '*modest interventions in schooling*' are the way to improve standards and raise achievement. Michael Barber - Head of the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) Standards and Effectiveness Unit has raised the counter argument, Barber (1996:131):

...caricatures concerns about the relationship between education, policy and the economy, suggesting that arguments about the structural causes of educational failure divert attention from where much of the responsibility for educational failure lies – the schools, their managers and their teachers. Whereas under the 'old order' there was a tendency to blame the system, society, the class structure –

anyone other than the schools themselves – for under performance. Now there is no escape.

The Labour Party has been extremely active since the 1997 election in reassuring the electorate of its total desire to drive up standards. Reynolds (1995:57) comments that the Conservative Party of the last Government was also involved and receptive to the research of the school effectiveness movement.

The Conservative Government also has clearly been influenced by, and had been receptive to, the messages concerning the variation in school quality and teacher quality that have emanated from our research base. Even though they have been consistently, wilfully and perhaps deliberately ignorant of the dangers of using school examination results as accurate measures of school effectiveness.

The Teacher Training Agency (TTA) have become involved in dramatic and far reaching revisions of the Teacher Training programme, and OFSTED has used some of the effective schools' research in the compilation of its check lists when undertaking school inspections. In addition, OFSTED has commissioned educational researchers like Sammons, Hillman and Mortimore (1995), Sammons *et al* (1994) and Newcastle University Department of Education in producing and reviewing information that it intends to use as part of its assessment processes with schools. Such an initiative is performance related pay for teachers. Reynolds *et al* (1996 b: 152) welcomes this political involvement:

It is worth noting that the interface between school effectiveness, school improvement and educational policy making is again proving to be a productive one. There are increasing signs of convergence in the interests of British policy bodies such as OFSTED and the National Department for Education and Employment, and the practice and findings of school effectiveness researchers. Both sides can only benefit from this, the policy makers becoming more aware of the complexities of judging school effectiveness and initiating change in schools as they appreciate the insights of the effectiveness knowledge base, and with the researchers appreciating the contingencies of a policy making perspective.

What is clear from the inside of a changing school is that while the desires of Government have reached and impacted on the school, the teacher in the classroom has not yet been totally swept up in this renaissance of change in teaching style, strategy and delivery. A possible reason for this could be that the government impositions and enormous amounts of change have taken teachers away from their primary focus, that of teaching.

Currently the TTA, OFSTED and QCA are trying to bring the two movements even closer together with a series of conferences to review the field of teacher effectiveness and the implications that this may have on policy making. The DfEE is also funding specific

school training in an attempt to bring to all schools the current knowledge in School Effectiveness and School Improvement research.

Barth (1990: 45) identified that there are two distinct strands or approaches to school improvement. The imposed top down approach, Barth argues could in the end be counter productive. The end product of such an approach is the proliferation of a series of lists of desirable features and actions. It is hoped that schools and the teachers in them will absorb the desirable features from such lists and the end product will be improvement with the concomitant raising of achievement. As a counter to this approach, Barth argues for the bottom up approach where the teachers, the pupils and the school community itself identifies the problems and draws up its own action plan to resolve it. He states the following conditions as a prerequisite for improvement:

- *schools have the capacity to improve themselves if the conditions are right;*
- *when the need and purpose is there, when the conditions are right the pupils and adults energise each other to learn and contribute to each other's learning;*
- *what needs to be improved in schools is their culture, the quality of the interpersonal relationships and the nature and quality of the learning experience;*
- *school improvement is an effort to determine and provide conditions outside the school and within where both adults and children promote and sustain learning for themselves.*

The key to sustained change is to institutionalise the process, get all the players involved in the game and to make clear the reasons and benefits for the change. The process is then part of the life of the school and it becomes controllable, not a bolt on extra that 'withers on the vine' very quickly. Research shows that to bring about a culture change takes approximately five years, and to sustain it during and after that time needs constant reaffirmation and involvement of all concerned. We now exist in an era where there is an imperative to be efficient at the management of change. The change focus alters often because of external influences and pressures, the history of current education is of 'constantly shifting sand' and the efficient and effective school is able to manage and move with that change influence. In order to do that the institution needs to understand the management of the change process and bring school improvement activities into line with that change. The current Performance Management Initiative with its performance related pay focus for teachers is an example of such a change. On one hand, there is an imposed governmental change of practice that entails a closer observation of teacher activity in the classroom, and a greater accountability for teacher action. On the other hand it could be argued that this could be just the change agent required to bring about improvement in teaching practice which might then bring about pupil improvement in performance. Will

such a close view of individual teachers bring about more teacher research? Will it encourage collaboration and give the support which will encourage pupil improvement, or will it pose such a threat to the individual that it will stifle collaboration and therefore have a negative effect on teachers? Only time will tell.

Appendix 2

Bosher (1998)

Yr. 11 Mentoring Project results and analysis 1998

In August 1998, the results for the G.C.S.E examinations for the 1997/8 cohort became available. This was the group who had the D/C borderline pupils identified and targeted for extra attention from the subject teachers and were supervised by the Senior Management Team. The results are seen as Tables 3a and b, and an explanation of the table is as follows.

The twenty pupils were selected after the Head of Year had examined the predicted grades for all the pupils in the cohort following the internal mock examinations in November 1997. Of the pupils who had a D/C profile, he selected the target pupils on the basis of those whom he thought would most benefit from the initiative, and also would be the most likely to be socially mature enough to personally manage the close scrutiny the initiative would inevitably involve.

Tables 3a & b. An explanation of the columns.

Column 1. The pupils' names listed in no particular order.

Column 2. SRA = Standard Reading Age. This is accepted by the Local Education Authority as the most reliable predictor of performance at GCSE. This standard reading age is established as one of the base line measurements taken on entry to the school in Year 7.

Column 3. This is the mean score of grades estimated that might be achieved given the SRA. The values allocated to each grade are;

Grade U	= 0
Grade G	= 1
Grade F	= 2
Grade E	= 3
Grade D	= 4
Grade C	= 5
Grade B	= 6
Grade A	= 7
Grade A*	= 8

For example, pupil Samantha Cook in Table 3a is shown with a mean of 4.0. This is interpreted as an estimate that Samantha will achieve on average GCSE grades 0.2 higher than grade D.

Column 4. Pupil progress. This is a comparator value produced as a result of the calculation of the plus or minus achievement of the pupil of the actual grades achieved against the predicted grade score mean.

Column 5 - 21. These are the subjects taken by the pupil in the GCSE examination. The first grade indicated is the predicted grade made by staff after the mock examination in November 1997. The bold type second grade is the actual grade achieved.

Column 22. This is the total analysis of the grade achievements at GCSE.

- = A grade achieved which is worse than predicted.

0 = The same grade achieved as predicted.

+ = A better grade than predicted.

Note: 1. NA Indicates that the grade or score was not available.

2. Where a grade was split and the achieved grade was equal to one of the splits it has been counted as = in the analysis column.

Table 3a

Name	SRA	Mean	up / down	Eng Lit	Eng Lang	Maths	Science	PE	Drama	B Stud	French	German	History
J Rees	5.3	2.22	-3.08	C/D E	C/D D/C	E/F E	E F				E G		D E
R Smith	NA	4.25	NA	D D	C/D D	C/D C	E D	C B		C E			D D
S Cook	4.2	4	-0.2	D D	D D/C	D/E D	E D		E C		C/D D		
A Bennett	NA	3.87	NA	C/D C	C D/C	D D	E E	C E	B/A C	C/D -	B D		
J Robbins	4.8	4	-0.8	D D	C D/C	D D	D D			D/C E		C C	
J Kale	3.9	4.78	0.83	E D	D D	D/E D	D C					C C	
E Plank	3.7	4.89	1.19	E D	D D/C	C C	D C					C D	D C
J Rose	4.4	4.78	0.38	C C	C C	D/C C	NA D			D/C D		C C	
R Spanton	4.5	5.11	0.61	C C	C C	D/C B	D C					B C	
P Throup	4.3	4.66	0.36	C C	C D/C	C C	D C					C C	
D George	3.9	4.55	0.66	C C	C C	D D	E D				C D		C B

B Gregory	4.2	4.5	0.3	C/D C	C/D D/C	D D	NA C					C D	
A Hossack	NA	4.78	NA	C/D B	D A	D C	D D			B C			
M Bird	4.5	4	-0.5	C/D D	D D	C C	E E				C D		
S Potter	4.7	4.55	-0.15	C C	C C	D D	D C				C D		
E Seerley	NA			E D	D D/C	D C	C D	D D			F/D D		
M Deane	4.8	4.44	-0.36	D D	D E/D	C/D C	D C					C/D C	
M Gale	4.1	5.25	1.15	C/D A	C B	D D	D D						A B
K Gilroy	3.4	5.12	1.72	B C	B C	D/C C	NA C					A/B C	
M Rees	NA	4.5	NA	B/C B	B C	D/C D	D D				D D		B C

Table 3b

Name	Geog	Art	Music	Graphic s	Food Tech	Child D Textiles	Textiles	Score
J Rees	C U				F F			5-, 3 =, 0+
R Smith								1-, 4 =, 2+
S Cook	D E		C D					3-, 4 =, 2+
A Bennett								4-, 4 =, 0+
J Robbins	C/D D	D/C D						1-, 7 =, 0+
J Kale	C/B C	B B					D C	0-, 5 =, 3+
E Plank		C C						1-, 3 =, 3+
J Rose	D B			C/D C				0-, 7 =, 1+
R Spanton	C C	D D			C/D B			1-, 4 =, 3+
P Throup	D D	C D		C C				1-, 6 =, 1+
D George		D/C D				NA C		1-, 5 =, 2+
B Gregory		C C						1-, 5 =, 0+
A Hossack		C C					C B	1-, 2 =, 4+
M Bird	D D				D C			1-, 5 =, 1+
S Potter	C C	D/C D			C/D C			1-, 6 =, 1+
E Seerley	D D			D C				1-, 4 =,3+

M Deane	A D	C/D C		C D				2-, 5 =, 1+
M Gale	C	B B						2-, 3 =, 2+
K Gilroy					NA B	NA C		3-, 4 =, 0+
M Rees	C D							3-, 4 =, 0+

An initial analysis of these results gives a disappointing but not unexpected picture. The interviews with the pupils conducted in May prior to the examinations showed a feeling of raised self-esteem and raised organisational skills, but little comment was made by the pupils of the actual benefit in individual subjects gained from undertaking the initiative. In fact, as highlighted earlier, one teacher used the initiative as a tool to make the pupil feel different to others in the group with a very negative effect. This lack of impact on the pupils would seem to be apparent on examining the results. I feel that very few staff got 'underneath the skin' of the initiative. By that I mean that they did not feel personally involved in it or accept any real or extra responsibility towards these pupils above the rest of the pupils in the group. To that end, very little extra time was spent with these pupils as compared with the rest of the group and from the tutorials I held, the target pupils did not really have any great amount of extra work set for them. This is not a criticism of the staff however, but a criticism of the management of the process. As Hopkins *et al* (1996) confirms, ownership and involvement of any initiative is of vital importance to its success. In this case, it was an example of a 'top down' approach, a mini version of the old methodology of the effective schools movement. That is, the Headteacher imposed the initiative onto the staff with little consultation, and the staff being the professionals they are, adopted the scheme with good grace but did not own it. Consequently they did not engage thoroughly with it. Neither did the management team allocate any additional time or resources to the teaching staff. I also have a suspicion that some staff were not even aware that the process was 'en train' with their pupils.

There were other factors impinging on these results also. These pupils are not by nature the most motivated or the most able to exhibit initiative. As a consequence, they possibly did not pursue the extra work that was required to raise the grade profile, alert the staff to the fact that they were part of the scheme or harass the subject staff to become more engaged with them. In addition, I feel the main component of the lack of success was that of time. The staff involved in the mentoring process, mainly SMT, acknowledged that few of them

spent anything like the required amount of time with their tutees. It is not surprising therefore that there seems to have been little effect on the outcome.

I feel disappointed on a personal front because I was fortunately able to spend more time with my pupils than many of my colleagues. I saw each pupil regularly every three weeks over the period and they undertook and achieved the tasks I set. My disadvantage was that I was unable to direct them specifically on subject orientated activities, and in retrospect I should have engaged more with the subject teaching staff to enhance the pupil's learning opportunities. Having said that, two of my pupils, Emma Seerley and Amy Hossack did raise their performance significantly. From Table 3b it can be seen that Emma was + 3 and Amy + 4 in their subject grade achievements. This means that they achieved better grades in their subjects than was predicted. This is better than most of the pupils on the project, so maybe my intervention had some effect.

Overall evaluation of the initiative:

In the light of experience, the initiative should be tried again, but with considerable amendment.

1. Allocate more time and resources to the subject staff.
2. Involve the subject staff in the planning process before the initiative starts.
3. Allocate more time to the mentors.
4. Consider whether the SMT are the appropriate staff to be undertaking this activity. It does need senior staff but maybe the Directors of subjects would be more appropriate.
5. Involve the Form Tutors much more. They are the learning managers of the pupils and need to be heavily involved in the mentoring process.
6. Start the process at the same time, but identify the pupils earlier and have the programme ready to start at the beginning of the Spring Term, not begin the initial meetings with the pupils at that time. This should be completed at the end of the Autumn Term.
7. Look to expanding the initiative to embrace pupils who are in the grade E – C band.
These are the pupils for whom organisation, application and motivation are a problem.

With the predicted grades for the 1998/9 cohort being so poor, there will be a need to expand the mentoring team considerably and their planning, needs to take place early in the Autumn Term so that all staff are prepared in time.

Appendix 3

The Soft Indicator Research Tool

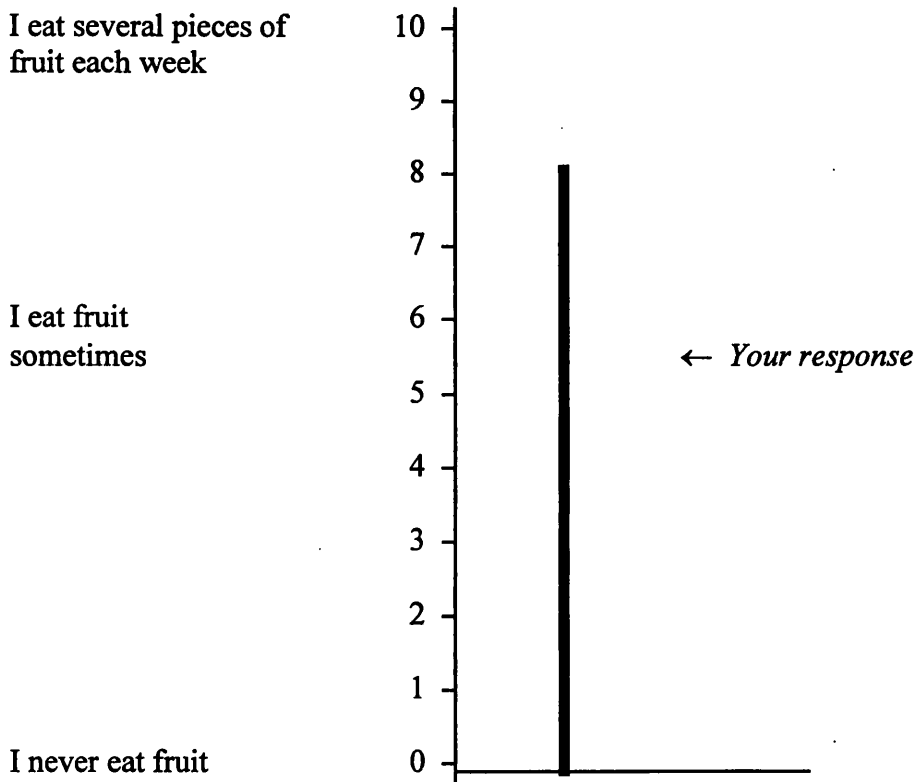
St John's School & Community College, Marlborough

A Survey of How I Feel About Myself

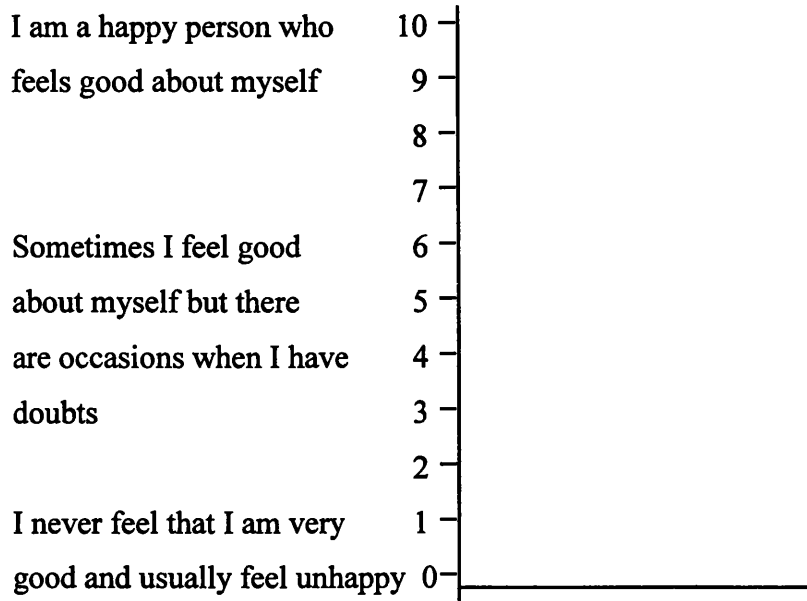
On each of the graphs below, draw a line on the graph to show where you feel that you fit in relation to the statement by the side of the graph. Please complete your answer like the example given:

Example

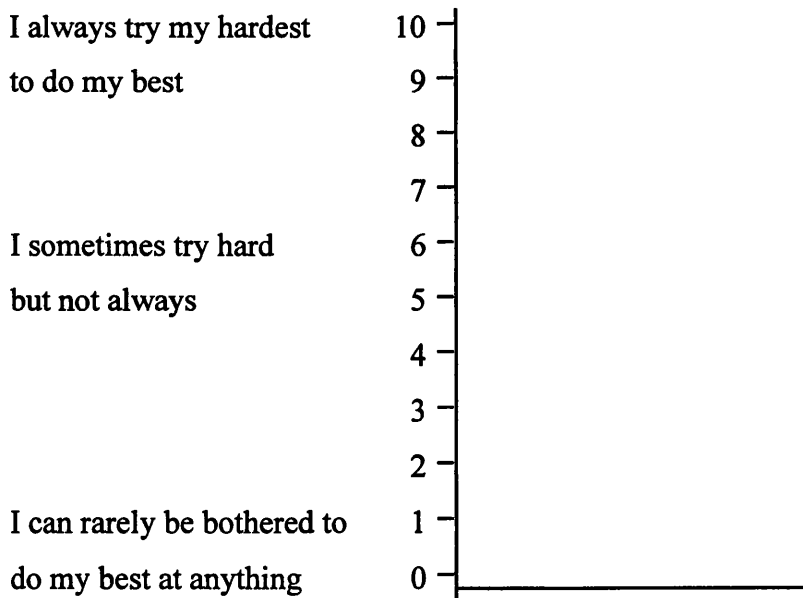
Eating Fruit



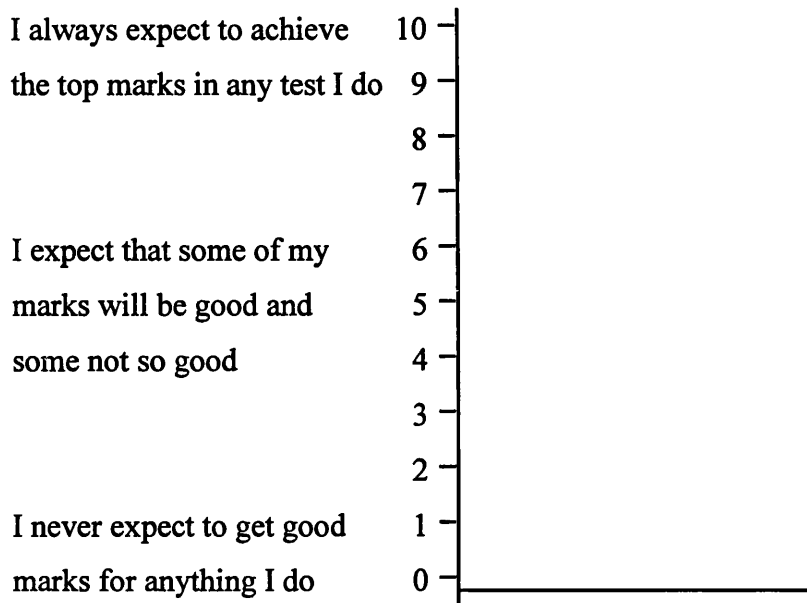
Self Esteem



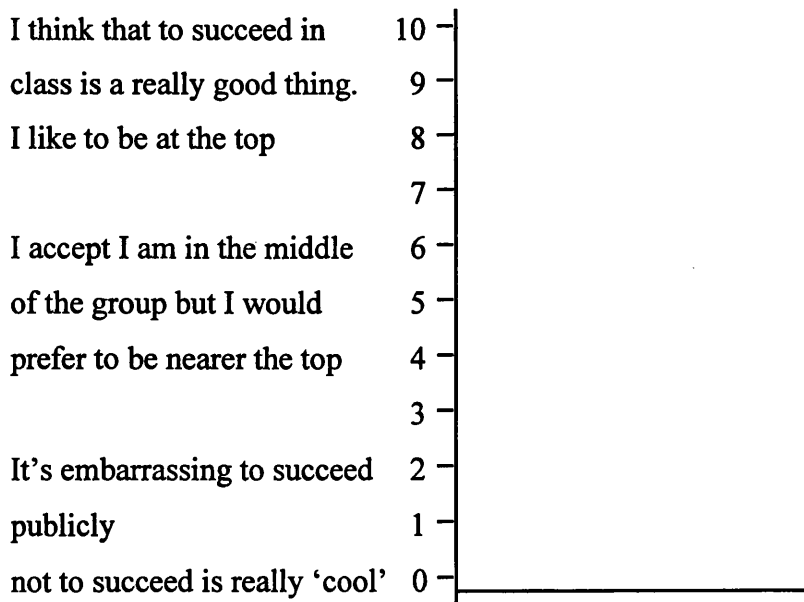
Motivation



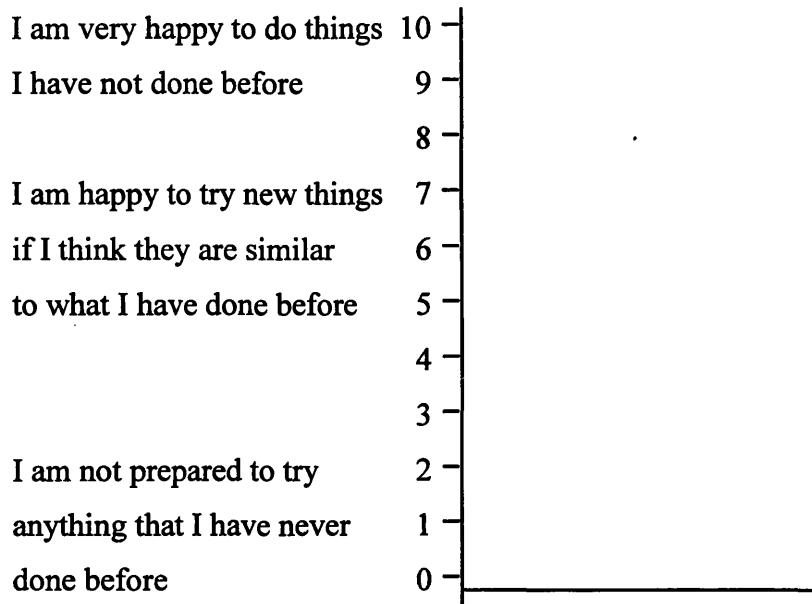
Expectations



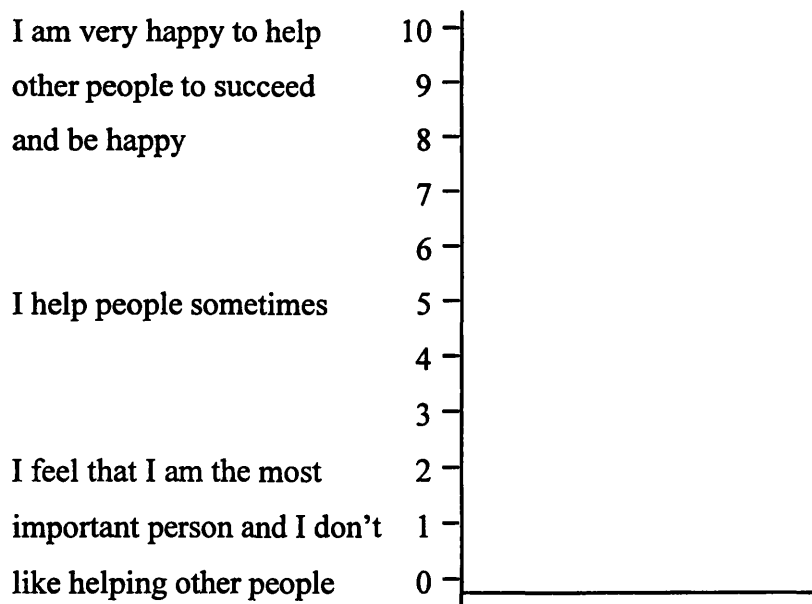
Success



Risks and Challenges



Helping Others



MA Boshier

Appendix 4

The Formation of the Raising Achievement Working Party

At the meeting on 12.3.96, raising levels of achievement was discussed and the academic group agreed that a working party should be formed to investigate the area. The working party was to be called the **Raising Achievement Working Party**. As underachievement had already appeared in the OFSTED (1996) report the Deputy Headteacher Curriculum, quickly undertook the organisation of this working party.

Working Parties

The vehicle chosen for this initiative was a working party in line with the schools accepted practice for many years. There were already a number of staff engaged in aspects of the work, and it was considered appropriate by the Senior Management Team to draw these different strands of research together to meet the challenge and task set by the OFSTED inspection.

The school has developed a democratic method of forming working parties. A general invitation is issued to the staff for all those interested in being involved to come to an initial meeting and then further action plans are made from that meeting. It is recognised by the Senior Management Team that the chair of such a working party is a key person in the success of the working party and tends to be nominated rather than elected. In this instance, a colleague who was for professional reasons keen to take part in a whole school initiative, and who was already involved in the Bath University T.V.E.I funded initiative in 'Improving the Learning Experience' was invited by the Headteacher to chair the working party.

Raising Achievement Working Party

The initial meeting of this group was on the 13th March 1996 with 16 members of staff present. As already stated, composition of the working party was voluntary, and the staff who attended that first meeting were as follows:

EXB (chair) Head of Business Studies and GNVQ

MAB Head of Upper School

KMP Assistant Head of Year for Year 7

AWM Head of Physical Education
 TEP Head of Science
 MJC Head of Environmental studies
 ANS Head of the 6th Form
 KJS Head of Lower School
 SMH Head of Curriculum and Pupil Support
 CWD Head of Biology
 LXS Teacher of English and Classics
 MXW Deputy Headteacher Curriculum
 DXG Senior Teacher for Assessment, Recording and Reporting.
 GGS Head of Mathematics
 ABC Head of Classics
 AJP Head of Year 11

At this initial meeting the various members gave a brief report on what area in connection with the issue they were currently working. The areas were as follows:

EXB / GGS	Bath University embedded T.V.E.I initiative 'Improving the learning experience'.
ABC	Value added implications for exam results using 'Yellis', the (Year 11 information system produced and managed by Curriculum, Evaluation and Management Centre in the School of Education at the University of Newcastle on Tyne) and 'Allis' (Advanced Level Information System).
SMH	C.A.Ts (NFER) and initial Yr. 7 tests and their applications.
GGS	Targeting weaker pupils in Mathematics in Years 10 and 11 with a view to forming a programme of help.
EXB	Visiting a local school to see how they deal with weaker pupils at GNVQ.
KMP	Issues surrounding the raising of self-esteem for the pupils whom are identified as being particularly weak in that area.
JRB	(Not at the meeting) Working with the mock results from the year cohort and the subsequent emerging estimated grades to work on the weaker estimates to raise their level of achievement.

MAB	Ph.D research working with Yr. 7 in particular but with the intention of co-ordinating the efforts of all parties
GBD	(Not at the meeting) working with difficult Year 8 boys who are underachieving as a result of emotional or behavioural difficulties to produce a behavioural modification programme and raise self-esteem.
SMH	Interested in an interactive teaching and learning package called 'Success Maker™' marketed by RM machines which has received excellent reviews from schools that have already used it. The system is to be researched more deeply and reported at the next meeting.

In addition to these reports, it was also noted that the Personal and Social Education Programme (PSE) had been rewritten to include items on self-esteem raising, thinking about themselves, assertiveness and raising expectations.

Pen Portraits of the personnel as seen by me

In order to try and understand the effects, successes and failures of this working party, I give here a series of pen portraits of the personnel involved. This is a very subjective and personal view, but it may help the reader to get a feel for how the group operated and why. I drew this description in October 1996 after it had been in operation for 6 months.

EXB (Chair) EXB is still working towards the final stages of his M.Ed. He has been in the school for 5 years and is Head of Department. Recently he has been trying to gain promotion to Deputy Head in other schools with little success. He is a large man in every sense of the term, very jovial with a high set of standards and classroom expectations. He does however lack both experience and management skills required for executive management posts. This may be one of the reasons for his lack of success in job applications. He is unable to chair meetings well, is deeply involved in his subject area but not in whole school issues, and does not seem able to think and implement new developments successfully. As a consequence, in recognition of these weaknesses, the Headteacher asked him to chair this working party with a view to giving him a whole school development, and to allow him to practise his management skills. My opinion at the moment is that he is not totally committed to the task. Now it is clear that he will not be moving post until the next job application season, he has gone off the boil. There seems to be little drive to keep the working party going or in harnessing the experience and

strengths of the personnel on the working party. I feel that I have to 'push from behind' to get some action. I suggest the course of action and EXB then sets the wheels in motion. This seems to be the wrong way round.

SHR joined the working party recently. She has just completed her MEd having had a year away from school to do it. She has now come back fired with enthusiasm to use some of the research material from her studies for the benefit of the school. Her post in school is 2nd in the English Department and she does not relate particularly well with the HOD. There is a tension over the literacy and spelling initiative being undertaken. I am not sure about the real motives of SHR in her desire to undertake this research, but from previous knowledge, it will be for self-centred reasons before those of the good of the school.

SMH HOD for CAPS. Keen to be involved in raising achievement because it will spread the load of his department and he has considerable experience and knowledge to give to others. He is a sound member of the group.

MXW (Curriculum Deputy) Totally committed to any initiative in school which will help her school, and the pupils in it to do better. She is totally supportive of all that is going on, very encouraging and has an executive voice and autonomy to make executive decisions.

IBR In the middle of his M.Ed. He has undertaken some work on bullying in the school and has been encouraged to join the working party recently by myself. Not as yet fully committed, but could have an important part to play using the data from his research.

KMP A very experienced and dedicated teacher who is very keen to work particularly with less able children. She is an assistant HOY and has done research in her previous school on self-esteem and raising achievement. She is very motivated to get results that she can use, and has masses of energy. She uses a lot of initiative and thinks a great deal about the issues. She is one of the driving forces on the working party

TEP/GGS These two colleagues, HOD of Science and Maths have a genuine desire to raise levels of achievement in their departments. To that end, they are both members of the T.V.E.I embedded project with Bath University and are striving within their departments to encourage all subject staff to become involved in the process. Both departments have

already put into place strategies for raising achievement and are working on the monitoring of it.

MXH, ANS, CWD are interested from a genuine point of doing their best for the pupils under their care.

JRB A very keen colleague totally committed to pupils and their futures. He is Head of the PSE and Careers in the school and has been instrumental in starting the 'Project 50' with the careers advisor SK, and also with the concept of acting on the grades that emerge from the Year 10 end of term exams. As a consequence of these emerging grades, action can be taken early in Year 11 to raise levels of achievement. He is a well-motivated and conscientious colleague.

DXG totally committed colleague who has a responsibility allowance for Assessment, Reporting and Recording. The outcome of much of the work of the working party will have an effect on his area and he has a professional need to be involved in all stages of its development.

AJP HOY has recently finished his M.A and has been involved in self-esteem and the raising of self-esteem levels in the school. He has given a great deal of help in this area, and also carries a genuine desire to help the pupils in his year group to achieve to the maximum of their potential.

Myself There are several reasons why I am part of the group. I am interested in the well-being and success of the pupils and have a genuine desire to help them achieve their maximum potential. I am also very interested in the whole process of educational enquiry and research, I enjoy doing it and feel that it will help the school move forwards. I think my interpersonal skills are good and this will be of benefit to me while carrying out this enquiry. I like managing people, and see a challenge in managing EXB who is the chair of the working party. The 'push from behind' approach has its dangers, but so far has been successful. There is also the human angle of a desire to complete the Ph.D for personal reasons, and because the school is sponsoring the project, but there is also the genuine desire to move the school forward. I am about to take over the role in the school as Professional Development Co-ordinator, and this is certainly part of staff development for all concerned as well as a working party to raise school achievement.

Appendix 5

My personality as seen by others

Group 1 Year 12

Pupil A:

Mr. Bosher is strict but kind. He explains things well and you can understand him. He is interesting. A great teacher.

Lucy:

Professional, consistent, good at 'A' level because he uses images to convey complicated ideas. I'd say he is always interested and willing to talk and have a chat. He is the sort of teacher that if you don't do your work you feel you have let someone down because he has respect. Generally a very nice man, focussed in class, laid back yet on the ball.

Laura H:

Your teaching style is serious, yet humorous. You are keen on class participation, which works well. You like people to have their own opinions. You're keen and talkative and want everyone to learn from everyone else. You are very fair with your reasoning and very supportive.

Pupil B:

Easily understood, he gets his point across. Jokey. When he is telling you off he doesn't lose his cool. Helpful.

Hannah W:

Serious but kind. I sometimes find lessons hard because we have been told to read up on work first. I think it would be better if you explained things before we read them through. On ski trips very nice, you always stick to your rules. You make me feel comfortable and help me when I can't answer a question. Top bloke.

Emma L:

Mr. Bosher is very good at explaining and discussing issues that we are covering in class. His lessons are interesting and fun which helps you to listen and understand the

topic. Everyone is included in the class so there is an even contribution, which also helps you to get to know the other students. There is good group work.

Pupil C:

Mr. Bosher is an excellent teacher. I enjoy his teaching because he makes everything very clear to understand. He seems to be himself when he teaches, so I think of him more as a person, so I believe the students can relate to him easier.

Group 2 Year 12

Anna:

Mr. Bosher teaches in a clear and straightforward way. I find his teaching style to be direct and easy to understand. Mr. Bosher is fair, shows some strictness (I'm not sure that this is the way to describe it but what I am trying to say is that if you want us to do some work, we know we have to do it). He is helpful, understanding patient (willing to go over what he has said until everyone understands it.)

Pupil D:

Clear concise teaching, explains things well. Fair but fairly strict on work. Understanding about problems both with academic issues, and problems outside the classroom.

Pupil E:

Charismatic teacher who teaches clearly and makes lessons a nice place. Pleasant, helpful, patient, fair, calm, good communicator, excited about his topic, cheerful.

Pupil F:

'Chirpie chappie' with a good sense of humour. He is a very fair teacher. You know where you stand from the first lesson. Patient, calm and helpful.

Laura:

Teaches in a friendly open manner to the whole class. Is very approachable if you misunderstand and applies various techniques in order to get the point across. I.e. discussion of work before reviewing it and writing it in order to make the point clear. Gives fair opportunity for extra study and homework dates. Will expand on student ideas in relation to the concept, and does not stray too far from the point.

Pupil G:

I think Mr. Boshier is a good teacher. I feel that he is interested in our progress and is always available for me to ask questions or to go to see him if I don't understand. He always explains notes in an interesting way. I think he looks for high standards of work and this encourages me to do my best. He is good at explaining the work and his notes are good. If you don't understand he is happy to re-explain in a different way.

Alex G:

You know when to be firm with people, during the lesson your manner is very good. Mixing polite humour with seriousness and the full intensity of the lesson content. What I really admire is how you can be humorous and laid back in lessons and still be firm if needs be without losing any respect from any of the pupils. You are very approachable and always have a smile on your face. Funny, polite, concise, easy to talk too professional and firm.

Pupil H:

A Good teacher who knows how to get the subject across well and in detail yet make it simpler. He seems to have a good, vast knowledge of the subject. Clever, happy, jolly, amusing at times.

Pupil I:

Mr. Boshier teaches us clearly and knowledge of the outside world is often brought into our lessons. We get clear and precise notes. He is very concise.

Georgina:

As a teacher, Mr. Boshier relates to the class very well. He uses examples that are common to the class to portray his explanation. He effectively dominates the class in order to gain full attention from the pupils. He is definitely one of the better teachers in the school as I am able to understand his teaching and he helps people who are less capable. Consistent, understanding and thorough.

I feel that he is a fair teacher who commands respect from his pupils. He's very good at keeping the pressure on his students, which keeps us all attentive during his lessons. The way Mr. Boshier presents himself is good. He is very clear when explaining various topics. He is also encouraging in the way he expects high grades from us all. He does however give criticism when needed, which is also good.

Pupil J:

Mr. Boshier as a teacher is quite good. The way he presents himself is very good, when trying to teach or describe us something, he puts it across in a way that is easy to understand. He uses his hands to elaborate his speech; he uses examples to help us understand easier which does work. Also he puts forth something in different ways and looks at different angles. The only criticism is that at time he can go too fast and he doesn't always make sure that we understand what he has been talking about.

Pupil K:

Mr. Boshier asks us questions in class. Although I don't like being asked questions in class it is good for me because I always remember the answers to the questions if I had not known them before. It is a good way to get me to remember things. If I had to do a presentation e.g. the first lesson we had to stand up and talk about a given subject and I can still remember my topic because I was so nervous. I think he is a good teacher. I feel that I can go and ask questions if I need to and he will be interested and happy to help.

Marcus:

Mr. Boshier appears strict at first appearance with a teaching fashion that may appear to be over expectant. However this is not the case after time. Mr. Boshier relates to a friendly welcoming relationship with the class and carefully states the importance and necessity of our work. He has a dry tasteful sense of humour which helps to create a teacher/pupil relationship.

Year 13 Group

Pupil L:

Teaching – constructive and structured with room to expand on points and ideas when difficulties are encountered. Focussed, has certain goals to meet in the lesson, helpful, thoughtful.

Pupil M:

Involves everyone in class discussion. Strict, and sometimes flexible with the handing in of work. Encouraging, good sense of humour, great amount of knowledge, teaches in a variety of skills, interactive, class discussions etc not just standing at the front talking all the time. Good ways to learn.

Pupil N:

Teaching style straight to the point, make it easy to understand, uses humour as well. He can explain something you didn't understand in several different ways. Is willing to go over something you don't understand several different ways. Sense of humour, happy, does not have a temper, confident, understanding.

Pupil O:

Personality- Sense of humour, happy, rarely angry or bad tempered, friendly, willing to help, has enthusiasm.

Teaching style. Involving, dedicated, relaxed, keen on remembering words, direct and straight to the point, willing to help, enthusiastic.

Andrew S:

Personality – Organised, sense of humour, firm but friendly, responsible, optimist.

Teaching style – Explains well, quite strict, makes sure we get notes and understand them, seems to enjoy the subject, and teaching it, High expectations and rightly so.

Positive attitude.

Matthew P:

Teaches straight to the point, giving all the facts without messing about. Gives clear notes, which are relatively easy to learn. Can be a good laugh, expects work to be done on time, listens to your point of view and gives help when needed.

James M:

Teaches with thoroughness and often explains points with good detail. Encourages students to make their own notes. Often lessons are fairly interactive with many questions asked. Personality – Open and honest, kind, relaxed sometimes demanding.

Pupil P:

The teaching style is I believe a good style. Mr. Boshier makes everything clear and easy to understand and if we still do not understand it Mr. Boshier goes about it in a different more understanding way. Mr. Boshier puts himself across as a friendly person who is not only there to teach the syllabus, but also to make sure everyone understands. Although he seems a serious man, this is not a bad thing as we can do a lot of work.

Pupil Q:

A teacher who demands respect. Genuine, talks to the class open-mindedly. Well spoken some times too well spoken using too long words. Clear language, sarcastic! Honest, sense of humour but still with an air of authority. Down to earth, can appeal to our generation and is young at heart. Likes to make the class inspired in thought not just state the facts to learn. Sometime ignorant when absorbed in individual conversations in the class ignores other suggestions (intentionally?). Family man who talks about his family a great deal.

James T:

Honest reliable, strict but fair, humorous, slightly sarcastic but not overly, informed intelligent, concerned sociable.

Pupil R:

A genuine teacher – someone who genuinely seems as though he wants to teach and see his pupils succeed. This shows through in the way he insists on us working hard beyond the classroom and always has the time or makes the time for us when we need it. His interest in extra curricular activities and enthusiasm about those also make the students respect him more as it is easier to work for him as he genuinely seems to care a lot about what he is doing. Being down to earth and honest is also much more appealing and therefore much more enjoyable to work with and the students enjoy the lesson and are much more willing to work. He also shows a respect for us in that he listens and is never patronising or sarcastic in his replies to questions about work or outside problems. He also brings a sense of humour and patience to the classroom, which is very important.

Jenny R:

Mr. Bosher has a very clear way of teaching, thoroughly covering the subjects. He has a good temperament for teaching, being patient with people who don't understand, but challenging people with greater understanding.

Jo T:

He teaches in two main ways by reading notes to us which we then write down, this is structured and formal, and he also likes to teach the class using their own knowledge. This seems to be informal, more challenging for the class and relaxed. Using both methods he seems to be enthusiastic to pass information on.

Appendix 6

The history of my teaching experience – circles within circles

History, the experiences of the moment and the future continue to shape the development of this living and dynamic process for me. Like many boys I joined the cub scouts at the tender age of six and as I grew in experience, I was soon promoted to the position of 'sixer'. In this exalted position, there was an expectation for me to pass on to the other members of my six the skills and wisdom that I had received when I was younger. Since I had received no training in the art of tuition, the skills I was passing on were very basic, and the audience very undemanding and unquestioning. The only possible construct on my teaching style at this very early age was that of imitation. Others taught me and so I cascaded this information on using the techniques observed and used on me. There could be no thought as to effectiveness of technique, suitability of the material to the audience and all the other sophisticated skills involved in the process of teaching.

I progressed from the cubs into the scouts and again as I developed I observed and imitated skills of the more senior boys in the group and the scout leaders. I continued to mirror the passing on of information and skills to the younger members of the group. I do remember at this stage being aware that some of the boys in my patrol were less able to take in information than others, but had little to offer in the way of technique to overcome the communication problem. I was taught by my patrol leader who at the time was a very domineering bully who ruled by fear. I quickly resolved that I would not treat younger boys in my care in the same way. Such an approach would be alien to my nature and this is probably the first lesson in man-management that I learnt. Teaching by fear is not a good way of getting the most out of your pupils.

Time moved on, and my next exposure to the craft of teaching came with my increasing expertise in the sport of swimming. As a competent county swimmer, it fell to me at the age of 16 to start coaching some of the younger members of the club. My knowledge base was now that of the information passed on from my coaches plus the skill based expertise gained by personal experience. I was successful and capable as a performer, so it was relatively easy for me to pass on the practical information to others. I was still not in a position to approach the task from a theory point of view. While I understood what was needed in order to refine a swimming stroke in practical terms, I still had to wrestle with

the intricacies of communicating that information to another person in a more refined term than 'watch me and copy'.

While this is a technique that as a practising teacher I recognise as being a valuable tool in the 'teaching tool bag', I had no other method of disseminating the information which makes more advanced teaching or communicating with others who have difficulty in understanding a problem.

Recently, I have noticed a similar problem exists with very able computer operators. Whether they are qualified teachers or not seems to make no difference, what seems to matter is that as a group of people, 'IT wizards' have difficulty in communicating with those of us who are less able and dare I say afraid of computers. Part of me as a teacher has learnt from the negative effect that many of these computer experts have on me. What is the problem with their approach? In my experience, the teacher says *'I really cannot understand why you can't understand, all you do is this'*. With that, there is a flurry of keystrokes and the magical and elusive application springs out of the screen. You, the beginner, are non-the wiser for it and cringe at the *'now you do it'* command. The screen swims before you and you can't even remember the first keystroke let alone the whole sequence. You make an ineffectual effort, only to hear the sigh of the teacher who springs into action and grabs the keyboard from you. *'All you do is this, why can't you understand'* and another flurry of keystrokes brings the screen to life again. Even on this second showing you are no further forward. With a parting comment of *'just experiment, it's very easy when you get the hang of it'* the teacher leaves you to find a more receptive and able pupil. You are left with a screen that is now stuck in some strange configuration and you are totally unable to do anything about it but switch off. The lesson ends with you even more afraid to go near the machine again, and certainly unprepared to ask the teacher for help. For me another lesson learnt and another tool to put into the 'tool bag'. If you are helping to teach someone a skill, you have got to explain it in a way they understand using a jargon free vocabulary, and allow them the opportunity to carry out the actions without your intervention. The phrase 'practice makes perfect' comes to mind, but has to be refined to read 'perfect practice makes perfect'.

Back to the history: At the age of 18 I left school and gained entrance to a specialist College of Physical Education to start my formal teacher training. Over the next three years I received both theoretical and practical advice on the craft of teaching, and at

various points during the course had the opportunity to refine the skills during teaching practices. The trial and error approach as a method of developing a teaching technique refined by the rebuttal of failure on a number of occasions was part of that development.

By the end of the three years I had convinced the College that I had sufficient skills and an understanding of the practice of teaching to an extent where they were prepared to grant me Qualified Teacher Status and let me loose on the unsuspecting world.

As with all occupations, this is where the real learning starts. As a naïve 21-year-old I had the normal full range, of ability and age, to deal with in my first teaching post. With little extra support I launched into a teaching career spanning eight years in that school. The process of initiating me a 'Probationary Teacher' into the profession seemed to bear little resemblance to what happens today. The process was supposed to be that of the Head of Department in the school and a representative from the Local Education Authority, usually the subject adviser, who was supposed to oversee the progress of the probationer through the year. I had one visit from the adviser and that was to discuss an activity that I was arranging. There was no support or advice from my HOD at all. The experience of doing the job was the way I developed my methodology. Once again though, I tried to emulate other members of the department and their teaching styles, and I remember I had a close colleague whose style I particularly liked. This man was a larger than life person with a very strong personality and an extrovert. I liked the easy manner with which he controlled and manipulated his pupils. When I analyse his attributes thirty years later I see an excellent physical performer (he was a teacher of Physical Education), a confident person in his own right, a good communicator and a warm and friendly personality. This combination made him a successful teacher who was both liked and respected by his pupils. I could not possibly match his physical prowess and expertise, but I could absorb into my teaching style his management skills and his manipulation of both pupils and staff by warmth and personality. It is from him that I learnt the power of a smile and the importance of playing to the strengths of others, if you want to get the best out of them. Flattery and the raising of another's performance in relation to your own is a powerful tool in the management of them. In the same way, when teaching pupils, appealing to their strengths is a clear way of raising their self-esteem and their own self-belief. If you can do that, then the process of passing from the 'educational known' to the 'educational unknown' becomes less daunting for them, and the task easier for you to manage.

Teaching Adults

The next stage in my development was the major involvement with adults via my appointment to a teacher at evening classes as well as my day teaching post. This contract took me into the world of adult education, and a very different scenario from that for which I was beginning to develop a competence during the day. The sudden realisation that adults learn in a different way to children and that their needs, expectations and progress were also different added to my 'tool kit'. Again, this realisation came as a result of making mistakes in the management of these adults. What surprised me at the time and was a significant process for me was their apprehension when facing a new experience for the first time. They seemed to feel much more exposed than children do and consequently needed much more re-assurance if they were to be persuaded to try something new. What also came as a surprise was how quickly critical, vocal and demanding they became if they did not get, what they felt they had a right to, or had paid for. As the teacher this very quickly made me ensure that the quality and preparation of the lessons I delivered were thorough and rehearsed before presentation. This excellent grounding in the hard school of adult education has been maintained to this day, and detailed lesson preparation has in the last thirty years provided a firm base from which my lessons have started.

Responsibility

After two years in my first post, I was given a 'post of responsibility' allowance. Now I had to make some decisions without the direct supervision of my Head of Department. The consequence of this was, for the first time I came into conflict with other members of staff on occasions. There were events for which I was now responsible impinging on other subject areas. Conflict management was new to me, and I think that of all of the areas in teaching this is the one, which is the most difficult to manage if a working relationship is to be maintained. Here I think personality plays a major role. If a dispute becomes personal, then an effective conclusion becomes much more difficult to achieve; a lesson learnt earlier in my responsibility-taking role. I do have a tendency to take criticism personally, and become stubborn in my own particular stance. My personality as stated earlier is of a generally placid nature, and it takes quite some time to make me angry. When I am eventually stirred, I tend not to be able to take the other point of view as objectively as is required, for a reasonable working solution to be achieved. I am well aware of this and I have over my teaching career made every effort not to become personally affected by the situation. I have realised as I have climbed the 'management tree' that I have to take a

professional and detached stance over issues, if that precious working relationship, whether it is with pupils or staff, is to be maintained.

After eight years of experience, I moved to Wiltshire to take up a more senior managerial position as the Head of a Physical Education Department. This move into management was the start of my aspirations in terms of career. I now felt I had the confidence, experience and ambition to become more than a classroom teacher. The realisation that I was now the 'expert' in the school in my particular subject area was very daunting to start with but I soon rose to the occasion. Being given the rights and responsibilities that pertain to the post was an important step in the development of the philosophy. For the first time, staff from the Headteacher down was prepared to listen to my point of view and accept decisions you made because I was in a position of authority. Providing those decisions were legitimately framed and of relevance to the situation I was able to maintain my position in the management forum of the school and also maintain my credibility both with my colleagues and the pupils. It is amazing what a position of responsibility and respect did for my personal self-esteem. The net consequence of that was that I became even more secure and positive in the decision making process. It was not until this point was reached that I think I was in a position to manage others, another cycle turns.

As the teaching philosophy picture builds, I have now reached a point where I have experience, high self-esteem, sound subject knowledge and confidence.

It is at this point in my experience where a quantum leap is made and another cycle starts. My appointment to the post of Head of Department caused some major disturbance to the school's existing status quo. It was at the point in the life of the school where it was changing its identity. That is, the two existing schools in the town the Secondary Modern and the Grammar were amalgamating. At the point of the amalgamation, most of the staff in the two existing schools were absorbed into the new structure. Some staff gained promotion as a result of this amalgamation, and three staff were appointed from outside.

All the posts of responsibility in the new organisation were made available to staff from the two component schools and it was made clear by the new Senior Management Team that the appointments would be made as a result of application and interview in the normal way.

What I was unaware of was the political situation that had existed as a result of this amalgamation. Some staff were not appointed internally, hence the outside advertisement and my subsequent appointment.

Unknown to me, a colleague from the Secondary Modern School who had already been teaching at that school for fifteen years and was the Head of Department was passed over in my appointment; an action which he clearly resented. In addition, other colleagues who were members of the department to which I was appointed Head were also in a difficult and it seemed to me unhelpful frame of mind. Two had new posts of responsibility as Heads of Year but had been in the previous schools, head and second in the department in the Grammar School. I was appointed to manage a new amalgamated department full of staff with much greater experience of teaching than I had, and who brought a variety of different political stances to the new department. My immediate thought was that I had inherited a department full of problems.

As stated earlier, self esteem and self confidence are two aspects of teaching that are required if successful management is to take place. Early on in my new post I was constantly asked to make the 'judgements of Solomon'. I realised that whichever decision I took having sought advice in a democratic way from members of the department, some members were going to feel disgruntled because I chose the opinions of others. I felt as if I was under constant observation and test, from most of the members in the department, and that they were all waiting for me to make mistakes. These of course I made from time to time with the expected inferences of *'if you had taken my advice this would not have happened'*.

The constant unrest within the department, as many of the staff fought to establish their position in its hierarchy and in the new school, caused me as a manager many sleepless nights. This competitiveness was so unnecessary, as all but one of the department was in an enhanced position of responsibility, that they had chosen. I put the competitiveness down to the fact that they were all sports persons and this was the world that they had been immersed and grown up in.

My early management priority in the department was to harness the strengths, expertise and long teaching experience of all the members, and to eradicate the unhelpful disagreements and unrest. Hence, I feel that I learnt the basis of my management skills in

this arena. I needed tact, diplomacy, strength, courage, humility, confidence and stubbornness to resolve the situation. As time went on, I felt that harmony was achieved, but the underlying problems never really resolved. It did give me a great deal of practice in management though.

More Responsibility

Within three years of my initial appointment as Head of Department, I applied for a second major post of responsibility, within the school and I was appointed as a Head of Year. At the time these posts were the power bases of the school and this promotion put me into a very strong position to continue my management experience. This particular post also brought me into a new context in terms of pupils and parents. I now had a great deal of contact with pupils and their social and emotional problems. As a manager of their personal and academic progress, liaison with a number of outside agencies now became part of my brief. I met regularly with such agencies as Social Services, Educational Psychologists, Police, Clergy, Child Guidance Psychiatrists, Doctors, Nurses and a range of other health care personnel. Each agency operates in a different and very specific manner and the recognition of this enhanced the possibility of using the agency to the best possible effect, to help the pupils.

Parents too now became much higher in profile with me. The school operated a system where parents were screened away from initial contact with the subject teacher and the normal interface was with a middle manager such as the Head of Department or Head of Year. As the pastoral post was much more child orientated, the contact with the parent body was consequently higher. This screening process was to protect the young and less experienced staff from the often-unreasonable attitudes of parents.

The type of problems I had to deal with were in many ways very challenging. They were often deeply personal and emotional and enabled me to develop both the caring and analytical skills necessary to manage the situations efficiently. Some situations brought me into close contact with other colleagues on the staff. Acting often as an advocate for the pupil, I had to regularly resolve the normal pupil/teacher conflicts that arise in any school. Diplomacy, pragmatism, realism and compromise all became skills that I learnt, then developed until they became well honed.

The position that I found myself in with two major jobs, became more and more difficult to maintain satisfactorily, and after being in post for five years, the staffing position was such in the school that I could relinquish the post of Head of Department. I had made a conscious decision that I was more likely to gain promotion as a Head of Year than as a Head of Physical Education. Thus a new Head of Department was appointed and I was now able to concentrate full time as a Head of Year. I continued to teach Physical Education although I was again thinking ahead and starting to anticipate the onset of age. I had always taught my second subject Science throughout my teaching career, and as age caught up with me, I decided to move towards a greater involvement with the teaching of Science. This brought with it another interesting dimension and the start of yet another cycle. I was now into a new subject area, with many colleagues who had much greater expertise and experience than I, in this subject. It was like being a probationary teacher again. I had to go and seek advice, made basic and silly mistakes, ask naïve and obvious questions and like all new teachers I had to take on the more difficult classes: a teaching fact of life. This transition also helped me in the development of my teaching philosophy. Once again I was a beginner, but this time the view through the metaphorical window was slightly different. I was in a middle management position in the school with, I hope, the respect of my teaching colleagues; a new teacher with an old head. As such I felt that I could afford to ask the silly or difficult questions without fear of losing face or of censure. It did allow me to refresh my views of what it was like to be a new teacher with all the fears and uncertainties that brings, but from a position of relative security.

At this time, I had the opportunity to apply for promotion within the school. The post of Senior Teacher and Head of the Upper School became vacant. This was a senior management position and a point from which a greater range of school experiences would be possible. I applied for the post, and against national opposition was interviewed and was subsequently appointed.

One of the major roles in the post was the management of the training for Probationary Teachers, the assessment of their progress, the provision of any support that was necessary and the final judgements on them before the awarding of Qualified Teacher Status. Now I could develop my skills and philosophy further with adults. All the skills developed so far were now used effectively and professionally with colleagues; my pastoral skills developed from my days as a Head of Year were in constant demand as young and new teachers tried to come to terms with the increasing demands of teaching.

Appointed as a Senior Manager, increased managerial skills are now required

My overall workload increased as another part of my new role was the day to day running of the Upper School. A new group of personnel now came within my brief. The premises and cleaning staff, the maintenance technician, the M.D.S.As (mid - day supervisory assistants), the laboratory technicians, the librarians and the reprographic technician all fell within my managerial sphere. To look through the eyes of these colleagues at how the school operated was a salutary experience. As a teacher you quickly form an impression of the world in which you work. This same world through different eyes was interesting to see. Conflict management soon became an important skill to develop because the groups of adults in the school had different points of view and goals to achieve. I quickly became immersed, if not bogged down, in the seemingly never-ending irritating conflict between the teaching staff, the non-teaching and the pupils. Anyone who has worked in schools is aware of the caretaker who gets upset to the point of anger at pupils making dirty a floor he has just polished. The cleaner who is always complaining because busy teachers do not tidy their dirty tea cups away in the staff room. The teachers who moan because the caretaker has not picked up the litter or put a new bar of soap in the staff lavatory. The cook who complains that the pupils on games practice at lunchtime are delaying the kitchen staff from clearing away after lunch. The secretarial staff who complain because a parent has appeared without an appointment, the teacher they want to see is not available and they are left to cope with the situation. My experience of management in this conflict situation is that compromise is the only possible solution and in most cases is achievable. The ability to diffuse anger and remove the personal from the conflict is another difficult skill to be achieved.

The position of a senior manager offers another interesting situation that occurs, colours and affects your every day life and work because you now become party to privileged or confidential information and involved with making decisions on information that most members of the school do not possess. I have found it very difficult to keep information confidential when teaching colleagues were making plans or developing strategies for the future. Plans that I knew would not be possible to execute because of the information that was in my domain but not theirs.

Also as a senior manager I was involved in the area of management of the teaching staff and any shortcomings that they may have. I also acted in support of staff against the often

unreasonable and untrue criticism from parents. All of these situations and experiences help to develop an outlook on the job and a philosophical stance that I adopted in my day to day interface with all those in my working community.

An additional role as Head of the Upper School was initiated when the Governors and staff decided that the school would go into partnership with Higher Education Institutions to be involved in Initial Teacher Training. Another set of adult professionals was now within my field of management. This group had slightly different needs to be satisfied, but all of the management skills I had developed over the years were still applicable. The approach to the tutorials with this group presented quite a challenge. The pressure to be successful came from a double feeling of duty. The first, an overriding duty was to the pupils and staff of the school to maintain the effective and purposeful progress. In addition, I felt the pressure to give to the trainee teachers all that had been promised, a part of the partnership agreement with the University. I saw myself as the gatekeeper for the profession and I had to satisfy myself that each time I agreed to a trainee being awarded Qualified Teacher Status that he or she would be an asset to the profession. The absolute measurement as always was 'would I like or allow my children to be taught by this person?' This opinion I took very seriously indeed and I was thankful for the training and experience I had received in my career of life that allowed me to make such important judgements. I viewed the importance of these judgements using my children as a guide because their success in life was so desperately important to them and me. When decisions take on that sort of magnitude of importance the quality of outcome was assured.

Senior 'Senior' Management

I have now been further promoted to the post of Assistant Headteacher. This post carries an even wider whole school brief and involvement, and brings me into contact with all aspects of school life and the management of all school resources both human and financial. Part of the job specification with the post is that of staff Professional Development Manager. This is a proactive position where I come directly into contact with all members of the adult school community. In addition, I have increased contact with the wider local community and the providers of all types of staff development provision. In the eyes of the Headteacher, this is a key position of responsibility in the school and central to his strategic plan for the future. I am very flattered by this promotion as it has raised my self-esteem and shown a trust, recognition and professional acknowledgement of my managerial abilities. To quote part of the school mission statement again, '*the school is to be a beacon*

of excellence to which others aspire, and a centre of lifelong learning'. Fulfilling this part of my job specification will bring me into contact with every member of the adult population of the school. Every employee will be expected to move their personal professionalism forwards, and I am to be the manager and facilitator of that development. This position is central to the focus of my thesis. It is from this position that I can do the two things which will affect all members of the school, the adults and the pupils. The brief for me to undertake is to manage personal professional development to make the teachers better at the task of teaching. If I can raise this performance, and the teachers become better at their job, then the increase in achievement of the pupils should follow. I also want to create an environment of improvement for teachers where they have a wider appreciation of what makes a good teacher, an understanding of what pupils of different intellectual abilities can be expected to achieve, and the mechanisms and strategies for achieving those aims. In addition, there is now a mandate for me to encourage teachers to become more personally involved in teacher research. Again the Headteacher has made it very clear to all staff that small-scale research, as a process of monitoring and evaluating classroom activities and strategy effectiveness, is compulsory. If staff are to do this effectively, they will need training in the appropriate enquiry methodologies, this also falls within my brief. It also takes professional development for teachers out of the classroom into the wider world of educational research. This is facilitated by the increasing contact with Bath University and other institutions. There is now not only an expectation in the school, but a positive desire from an increasing number of teachers to use the latest educational research material available from these institutions to forward their own practice. These contacts can be achieved through my role as Senior School Tutor with Bath and my 'in school' role as Professional Development Manager. The support from the Governing body of the school in the form of financial help given to staff to undertake further professional qualifications seals the resolve. It confirms the sincerity of the school statement that it wishes staff to develop, so that in turn the pupils will raise their achievement in the light of this new and increased professionalism. It is with this backdrop of the Professional Development Manager that I undertake the research for this thesis.

In addition to this role, my standing brief to take over the role of the Headteacher, if he is not available, puts me into the almost ultimate executive position in any school. After two terms in the post as Assistant Headteacher, the Headteacher further refined the management structure. I was again promoted, this time to the position of Deputy Headteacher with the same professional development mandate, but an increased legal

responsibility. The term of employment for deputy heads is different from that of other teachers and I am now bound by these new and increased responsibilities. Here is the start of another cycle.

What of the future

The Teacher Training Agency (TTA) has made the statement that teachers should now be looking at a continuum of lifetime learning. The teaching profession is undergoing rapid development and there is now an expectation that all teachers will be involved in this life long learning process. Indeed, as already stated, St John's has the expectation that all staff will undertake life long learning as a pre-requisite of working at the school. St John's is a '*learning school*' to use Southworth (1994: 54) language.

Aside from their personal and career needs, teachers as professionals need to keep abreast of new developments in the curriculum, extend their expertise and acquire new competencies.

Southworth (1994: 54) goes on to quote Joyce and Showers (1980) who say:

Teachers have to fine tune skills that they already have and also add entirely new ones to their repertoire of teaching strategies. Together these form the substance of professional growth.

Awards and qualifications such as NPQH and Advanced Skills Teacher criteria are being put into place to support this, and the aspiring leaders and managers of the future will have to achieve increased accreditation and higher professional qualifications if they are to climb the career ladder.

To service this requirement, the school through the encouragement of the Headteacher has started to develop an environment where this is both encouraged and welcomed. My continuing educational philosophy development will be further enhanced by this new and exciting initiative and is supported by Southworth (1994:55):

One major task of the schools in the 90s, therefore, is to co-ordinate their staff and the school development plans, so that teachers can learn collaboratively and grow as a group.

As we start the new century, I would venture to suggest that this concept is still only just beginning. I would like to think that at St John's we have made careful provision to extend the opportunities for such teacher development.

Professional training

As a qualified teacher, I have spent a number of years developing my teaching skills, strategies and expertise. This too must impinge on and interact with the other factors helping to develop my teaching philosophy. The basic skills were outlined in Education lectures at my College of Education. Here the theoretical aspects of teaching were discussed together with input from the collective wisdom of educational practitioners and researchers. This theoretical input was supplemented by the practice of teaching in a controlled environment. That is to say all potential teachers were expected to take part in a major school based teaching experience once a year. As we developed in confidence and maturity, the length of time involved in direct contact with children in schools increased. In addition to this block exposure, there were weekly opportunities for individual students to take part in small group teaching sessions. The College of Education had an agreement with several local schools that their Physical Education lessons would be held in the college gymnasium and taken in turn by members of the student body. This provided a very potent forum for learning. After each lesson, the performance of the trainee teacher was constructively criticised by the lecturing staff and the remainder of the trainee students who had observed the lesson. The discussion that resulted encompassed a wide range of opinion and helped to formulate skill strategies and knowledge very quickly.

Since graduation from initial teacher training I have been involved in several additional professional qualifications. These qualifications have had direct relevance to and often been part of my teaching in school. The theoretical research into both day to day school practice, and into the wider field of educational research have continued to add to the base line knowledge that I possess and use in my every day work in the classroom. The theoretical input in particular helping me to test and shape my teaching philosophy.

Trial and error management

This may sound like and give the impression of an unplanned and unsound methodology for philosophy building. My feelings are quite to the contrary, however. It is 'all well and good' for experienced and able practitioners in any area to suggest the best possible techniques or approaches to the process of teaching and learning, but the individual has to do it. The process of teaching and learning has a large number of variables in interaction at any one time that impinges both on the teacher and the pupil. It is the balancing of this variable equation that makes the teacher effective and efficient and the pupil the sound learner. Advice for all trainees as teachers is that experimentation is a very legitimate form

of teaching strategy. There are so many different ways of achieving the same goal that only by trial and error will each individual be able to make a value judgement about the efficacy of the approach. Courage is needed together with the support of the trainers if successful experimentation is to be achieved with trainee teachers. The courage required is for the trainee to go from their personal 'comfort zone' into the unknown and for the supervisor to allow this to happen. The end product has to be such that the strategy being employed at any one time suits the personality and experiences of the teachers, the abilities and personalities of the class and the environment in which the experiment is taking place. To get a good match of all of these factors takes time and patience. The knowledge that any particular strategy did not work with one group does not mean that it will not work with subsequent groups. The trials must continue. Remembering that the time of day, day in the week, the weather, the season and the mood of the pupils will all have uncontrollable effects on the experiment.

Beyond initial training, experimentation goes on constantly with all teachers. The reflective practitioner modifies the next lesson in the light of the past one. It is during these reflective processes that the conversations with one's inner self take place. These inner reflections often change behaviour; an example of learning at work. Knowledge accumulates as does skill, and the adage of 'you must look backwards to move forwards' is an important rule of thumb. No teacher can predict with certainty what will happen in any lesson. The planning may be thorough and the resources prepared but unknown variables are ever present which could send the lesson off balance. The task then begins to bring the planned lesson back into line. This strategy if successful becomes embedded in the teacher's bank of experience and can be used on subsequent similar occasions. This is the teacher's skill repertoire and the experienced teacher can bring it to the surface and deliver the appropriate strategy for almost all occasions. Experience is one of the keys to success in all areas of life, and the multifaceted experiences that emerge every day in the life of a teacher, serve to give that range in a very short period of time. Reflection is an important part of that educative process for the teacher through which learning takes place. Learning is not only about the craft of teaching but also about the teacher themselves. At the heart of this thesis is the concept that as I learn about myself, so I can utilise that learning to work with others more effectively.

Outside the classroom in the areas of personnel management, the process of trial and error continues. Managers soon get a feel for the appropriate way to approach individuals. The

sensitive and experienced manager knows when to persuade, cajole, pressure or demand. When to sympathise with, argue against or adopt a neutral position. All these skills have been developed either by observation or by previous negative situations. In the school of 'hard knocks', the best of managers has made mistakes, approached a problem in totally the wrong manner or misjudged the response of an individual. The good manager learns from the mistake and alters the approach in order to achieve a more positive outcome if that situation arises again. It is said that 'experience is a series of near misses' and on most occasions that statement is true. The crux is that the reflective practitioner does not repeat the same mistake.

Management styles and leadership

This part of the chapter must not pass without some comment on management styles. The school is working hard to be and live as a '*learning school*' to use Southworth's (1994) term, and a '*moving school*', to use Hopkins *et al* (1994) and Stoll's (1999) term. There is no reason why it should not be both, and is in my opinion very close to being so. If that is the case, what sort of leadership and managerial styles should be exhibited to achieve such status and do I have the necessary skill of both management and leadership to fulfil the criteria?

Leadership is about vision, direction and inspiration; management is about planning, getting things done and working effectively with people. Both these tasks are essential in any school, and I hope that through the evidence gained in this chapter and those that follow, I can claim to have in some degree all of the characteristics required for both of these roles. In terms of leadership I feel that I fall in line with the Stoll and Fink's (1996) model of '*invitational leadership*' where messages are communicated to individuals in a humanistic way to let them know that they are able, responsible and worthwhile. If people feel good about themselves, then managerially you will get more out of them and they will get more out of themselves. In terms of pure management skills, I see myself more as a transformational leader as described by Mitchell and Tucker (1992) than the transactional leader of Leithwood (1992). West-Burnham (1997) makes the difference between the two clear.

Leading is concerned with:

vision

strategic issues

Managing is concerned with:

implementation

operational issues

transformation

transaction

ends

means

people

systems

doing the right thing

doing things right

While all managers have to be good at the activities in both columns on occasions, the more human 'leading column' is the style that sits more comfortably with me.

Life

An individual's philosophy is constantly being shaped and reshaped as the experiences of life unfold. Day to day contact with other individuals allows for the testing of hypotheses both consciously and unconsciously. The skills of interpersonal relations are constantly honed, and this process is the basis of all teaching. The dynamics of interaction to produce the most positive end product is an ongoing quest. The fallibility of human nature and life's foibles are an interesting arena in which to develop skill management. Life then is an education in itself, and has been an important contributor to my philosophical development.

Observations of others in their professional role

We have all got something to learn from others. It is really important to keep an open mind and to be receptive to events occurring that affect you. One of the definitions of learning is that the process brings about a permanent change in knowledge and behaviour. Teaching philosophy will develop and change if this open mind approach is adopted. How others approach any situation is a case study to observe. Their actions, rationale and method all bear interrogation and questioning. There are, as mentioned before, no right or wrong answers, it is just that some approaches will provide a more positive outcome than others. To seek advice from others more experienced in the situation than you, to shadow and observe as they deal with the situation or to take the advice and use their strategy, are all ways of enhancing your approach. Even approaches that do not work are valuable as they reinforce how not to approach a similar task in the future.

Interests outside teaching

Contacts with other people outside the world of teaching can also contribute to philosophy development. My interest as a member of the British Red Cross Society, for instance has brought me into contact with a range of people of all kinds and abilities, none of them

connected with the teaching profession. By contrast, my interest in golf is also of importance. While the game like any other is composed of a multitude of skills and with the object of winning the competition between yourself and your opponent, it is the etiquette and laws of the game that are of interest to me. Quite clearly, they are constructed in a manner that forces fair play and equal competition even between two people of different abilities. The themes of trust, fair play and honesty run through the whole ethos of the game and it again reinforces values that are so important in my life.

Academic and research activities

Since 1971, I have been on the journey of life long learning. I say 1971 because before that time I consider my academic experience to be that of any other professional preparing to develop the skills and levels of competence required for the rigours of the job. Since 1971 however I have been involved in a series of learning experiences that have taken me beyond the normal requirements of the teaching profession. The extra professional qualifications I have achieved have been important in their own right in terms of career enhancement, but they have had another benefit as well. The involvement of myself with academia has helped and contributed to the development of my educational theory. The process of undertaking research, reading academic literature, interrelating with University staff and developing research methodologies have all contributed to the data base of knowledge for me. The rigour of academic expectation, the challenging of personal theories and philosophies and the vigorous application and need for validity and reliability have all contributed to my personal development.

My family

The final component that has contributed to my educational philosophy has been my family. Rearing a family is in my opinion the ultimate teaching experience. Your children are mostly what you make them. The shared experiences of living together and inculcating in your children the set of values that you and your partner believe to be important is in my opinion probably the most important thing you do in life. So what values do you hold and how do you pass those values onto the next generation? Once again, the values I hold have been an amalgam of influences from my own parents, my wife's parents and the life we have experienced together. The influences of the Church, of society, of the legal constraints that we live under as members of a community and our personal beliefs in what is right and wrong all help to mould our thoughts. Into this equation come the children. For their formative years, the dictates of family life are very much imposed by the parents. The

sensible parent however recognises that as children mature, they quickly develop minds of their own and wills that drive them often in a different direction to the way that you as parents feel it is best for them to go. This has to be recognised and as parents you are wise if you create a scenario of trust and discussion where communication between all members of the family are both encouraged and respected. Parental respect for their children is of paramount importance to me. They have to be in charge of their own destinies and of course they will make mistakes on the way. I feel that as parents we must provide a loving, caring and supportive environment which will support the children in the decisions that they alone must make. Too often the ambitions of the parents are imposed on the children with devastating consequences. The difficulty as parents, of course, is that there is a very fine line between encouragement and support and persuasion. Controlled experimentation with relationships, an open family to friends and as open a series of opportunities as budget and time will allow are all factors which cement the family together. To hear your teenage daughter say that her mother is her best friend is perhaps the ultimate compliment.

Appendix 7

My journeys through the thesis

This thesis is a series of journeys through time and space and the old space fiction concept of ‘where no man has gone before’ is faintly echoed here. To tell the story of the development of this thesis has been difficult for me. It is difficult in terms of finding the appropriate vehicle to adequately describe the multi-layered and multifaceted study that I have undertaken. The imagery and analogy that I feel might assist most in this understanding is that of a series of inter-related journeys along a single path. These journeys are interlocked and intertwined, sometimes quite inextricably, and there are clear cross-references and interrelationships between them. Another image I might consider is that of a botanical bulb. To explain this idea, there is a strong outer skin which covers all the structure at surface level. This I would compare to the general contextualising and development of the thesis. Underneath this is a series of layers of succulent food leaves, designed in nature to feed the embryo deep inside the plant. It is from this inner depth that the real future of the plant is developing, with the eventual outcome of the bulb bursting forth into a new plant at the appropriate point in the growing season. This plant will be new and fresh carrying all the characteristics of the past but in the new form of the future. Such then is the imagery of my thesis.

The layers of leaves or pathways to be explored

My own professional journey through my educational career, incorporating the values I hold and the effects on my teaching together with the experience of teaching in the classroom for the past 35 years are noted, and described fully in **Appendix 6**. The outcome of this journey will have been the creation and application of my own living educational theory to the every day life in the school.

Underneath that layer is the journey of ‘Action Research’, and its application to the thesis. As the thesis develops, it will become clear that there are three other layers. The first of these is my school role as the Professional Development Manager. In this role I am concerned with the appropriate development of all staff and I will track the effects and actions that I had and will have on these staff as they wrestle with the concept of raising achievement in the school. Added to this is the development and application of my learning as I interact with colleagues and students. Finally, there is the direct effect that I

had and continue to have on the pupils themselves as we all strive as a partnership to raise achievement and standards. Let me reiterate the research question:

How can I as the Professional Development Manager working with teachers, support and enhance the learning and achievement of pupils in a whole school improvement process?

My personal and educational history as outlined earlier will show that one of the driving motivations for completing this degree is the ever-present feeling of educational inadequacy. This remains as one of the main motivating factors for me. To prove to 'I don't know who', that I can cope with intellectual activity. I say I don't know who because I have never been challenged in my life about my intellectual ability nor my ability to carry out work associated with my professional role as an educator. However, somewhere in my psyche lies this demon. Driven by this internal motivation, I decided in 1996 to make representation to a University to undertake a Ph.D. It was a surprise and pleasure to me that Jack Whitehead was allocated as my supervisor. I did not know until some time later that Ms Jen Russ was also allocated to me in a joint supervisory role in view of her knowledge and deep interest in the School Improvement and School Effectiveness fields. The first problem I came across during my journey was a rather curt note from Jen letting me know that she felt marginalised because I was not keeping her informed of my work. I was horrified at this, and genuinely concerned that I had misunderstood in my ignorance the machinations of the University operation as to just what joint supervision meant. This problem was easily overcome, the flow of information to Jack and Jen made secure, and a two-way dialogue securely established. At every visit Jack and Jen were so supportive of what I had presented to them that I was concerned. I could not imagine that the every day work that I was presenting was so exciting, and I needed constant reassurance that they were not artificially praising me to maintain my morale. While I found the research intellectually challenging, and the writing more so, the value of my contribution was not initially obvious to me. In the end, I did believe them, and I think that that was a turning point in our relationship. In as much as I started to have some confidence in myself as a researcher and a reporter.

My own learning is important on this journey as an Action Research Cycle in its own right. As I have just stated, at the start of my research I regarded my supervisors as the leaders and I was totally in awe of both of them. I could not imagine myself coming to terms with what undertaking a Ph.D entailed once it had been clearly explained to me. It was a much bigger undertaking than I had anticipated although the rigour that both Jack and Jen

applied was what I expected and indeed demanded. Each meeting/tutorial developed a pattern that we all felt comfortable with. That is to say, I would produce a substantial amount of written work and submit it to both Jack and Jen prior to the meeting. They both independently made comment in written form on their areas of expertise and interest. During the tutorials, which I taped in order to make notes from at a later date, wide ranging discussion then took place around the material I had produced. In the early stages of the degree, I was almost a passive respondent, and could only contribute at what I considered to be a superficial level to the discussion. As I developed in confidence, and with the encouragement of both my supervisors, more in-depth conversations took place. It very slowly dawned on me that this was my research and that I could explain it in any way that I thought fit. While the conventions of research methodology and literature involvement are of course a necessity, the dialogical format was to be my own decision. This came as a surprise to me, and it has taken me over a year to gain sufficient confidence to fully explore the freedom that I now feel. I think the turning point for me was two fold, a paper by Zoë Parker (1998), which convinced me of my freedom to express and write my thesis in the way I want to. More frequent contact with Ph.D theses and a clearer vision of where 'I' as a researcher can locate my own writing added to that confidence. Whitehead (1998) Eames (1997) and Polanyi (1958) all support and verify the use of 'I' as a legitimate style of research reporting, and this has given me the freedom I need. This is further supported by the work of Lyotard (1984) who points out that often the academic system *per se* attempts to divert the style of writing or research into 'establishment formats'. Lyotard (1984:63) refers this behaviour as '*terrorist*' and sees such behaviour as a defensive mechanism to eliminate '*a player from the language game*', thus disallowing an individualistic contribution. Armed with such support, I felt a legitimisation for writing my account in my own style. I also note a change in writing style as my research has progressed. Again with the support of my two supervisors, they have encouraged me to move from a purely mechanistic reporting style of fact to a direct engagement with research literature. This had added depth and validity to my thesis and given me the confidence to truly locate my study in the world academy of educational research.

Jen earned my complete trust when I attended a research weekend organised by the University in October 1997. Several memorable events happened at that weekend. I was asked to deliver a short paper on my work to date, and at the end of the delivery I was challenged by a member of the University staff as to the scope, breadth and integrity of what I was doing. After a year and a half of work this damaged my morale considerably as

I did not at that time have the confidence to fight back against this well respected and experienced researcher. On another occasion during the weekend, Jen delivered a tutorial on how to access research literature. This was like a breath of fresh air to me as this had been bothering me for year and a half. The confidence that she gave to me with her clarity of thought took me forwards. I now knew I had two supervisors whom I trusted implicitly, who were experienced in the task of supervision and were helping me to research and report effectively.

The first part of my research was satisfactorily underway. I had the motivation, the enthusiasm and some early data to get me started. I quickly began to write papers on areas of raising achievement in school recording and reporting on educational initiatives that the school was involved in. At regular intervals I sent papers to Jack and Jen for their comment. As time progressed, as with all long-term research assignments, things started to go wrong. Some of the initiatives at school folded up or faced stiff staff opposition and were sidelined. Pressures of teaching offered me less time to carry out the data collection for my research as efficiently as possible. One aspect of Action Research is that data has to be collected while it is current otherwise actions are taken to alter the balance of the equation or alter people's thinking. This I was finding difficult to do. Despondency and despair crept in. What kept me motivated were my regular visits to the University. Just when I thought the door on my research was closing, conversations with Jack and Jen opened up another aspect or way of approaching the task. One of the interesting things about the supervision at the University is the powerful way in which I am encouraged to make my own realisations without being directly told. I feel it is again like the leaves of a bulb. I peel one off and there is another layer underneath. What my two supervisors are extremely good at is their own self-control. They are able to see from my writing much more than I can, but they allow me to discover it in my own time. As a style of teaching, this is what true learning is all about. They are acting as the facilitator of my learning not like a didactic teacher at the front of the class giving instruction but allowing no time for thought or reflection to take place and certainly no internalisation of what is to be learnt. As far as teaching goes, I have taken this style back into the classroom as part of my own teaching methodology. The tutorials also offer an opportunity for debate about the subject of my research and a genuine exchange of philosophical views between three interested researchers. What I have now come to terms with is that I have an equal share in these conversations. An understanding that my two supervisors have a genuine desire to learn from me as much as I learn from them. For a long time I have cast myself in the role of

student and they as the teachers. While this is of course partly the case, there is a professional respect on both sides.

I have been encouraged to record in my field diary my feelings and emotions as I go through the roller coaster of writing this research. Certainly my emotions ebb and flow. The putting of pen to paper is sometimes a chore with little to show for hours of sitting at my computer. This leads to despondency and depression. Then I create a piece that I am pleased with and like a small child I cannot wait to send it to my supervisors for their comments. What I find very encouraging is that there is never a putdown. Always encouragement even if there are then indications of how to improve on what I have written. In February 1999 I reached a stage where the 'puppet masters' could almost cut the strings. I felt like the motorist who has just passed their driving test, very confident with someone sitting in the passenger seat just in case, less confident when it is time to go solo. This support and encouragement approach has carried through to my teaching. I now look through different eyes at colleague's, trainee teacher's or pupil's work. All of them like me invest huge amounts of time and effort into completion of the task set. To have it destroyed by criticism would be very counterproductive. I now respond in a much more positive manner to such work as a direct result of my treatment at the university. An example of both my learning and an action cycle in its own right.

I have alluded to the contact that I have with Trainee Post-Graduate students from the University. This too has been part of the journey for me. I have used them as a source of data, involved them as researchers in the data collection at school, and encouraged them to undertake research in their own right. The relationship has been enhanced by their knowledge that I am involved in my own research and my close connections with the University. This is another example of a partnership that is mutualistic in operation and outcome. The journey is still ongoing. It has been generally smooth although there have been occasions when despair and despondency have dogged my thinking. The sheer size of the task seemed daunting and four years on it is still a huge mountain to climb. What is supporting, is the knowledge that both my supervisors are imposing a rigour of approach to what I am achieving in the sure knowledge that the end product will justify the methods employed and will meet the criteria of the examiners.

The action research journey

The Action Research journey for me has proved to be demanding and fascinating. The concept of creating a living educational theory from the practice perspective has provided me with a vehicle which I can use to explain my learning as it happens within the context of the school within which I work. To have the opportunity, the freedom and the privilege to now create a personal educational theory seems almost indulgent. I have been greatly influenced by my mentor Jack Whitehead in his clarity of definition of a living educational theory, and I take on board the responsibility that Jack has given to me in offering my contribution to the existing knowledge base. Whitehead (1989:2) states of living educational theory:

In a living educational theory the logic of the propositional forms, whilst existing within the explanations given by practitioners in making sense of their practice, does not characterise the explanation. Rather the explanation is characterised by the logic of the question and answer used in the exploration of questions of the form, 'How do I improve my practice?'

I define theory in Chapter 3, developing the process of Action Research and the creation of living educational theories there, and show how this journey is embedded in research literature.

My journey as the Professional Development Manager

I pose the question, is there any support for the teacher as the classroom researcher apart from the small minority who are involved in furthering their professional qualifications? In St John's School there certainly is. In fact it is more than just support, it is an expectation of tenure at the school. Classroom research is a central part of the school's drive for the concept of life-long learning for all staff, and is part of the initiative to raise achievement standards in the school. The concept of the Teacher Researcher is also being welcomed in the wider educational establishment. In his annual lecture to the Teacher Training Agency, David Hargreaves (1996:1) explored the relationship between teachers and research and made comparisons with the medical profession. His introductory comments were '*Teaching is not at present a research-based profession. I have no doubt that if it were, teaching would be more effective and more satisfying*'. He goes on to show that in the medical profession, research is carried out by doctors i.e. practitioners for themselves. Whereas in the educational community, the subject of research is often decided by educational researchers, and carried out by educational researchers, the classroom practitioners do not seem to be consulted, involved or see the value of the process. I think

that the difference between the two groups is one of professional credibility. Doctors historically have had the mystique of long professional training and a closed world of practice. They have actively encouraged and kept their knowledge to themselves. Teachers on the other hand have suffered for a long time with the problem that every one at some time has gone to school and is therefore an expert on education. Hargreaves (1996:4) points out the consequence, teacher activity is not valued as a source of research data.

Today teachers still have to discover or adopt most of their professional practices by personal preference, guided by neither the accumulated wisdom of seniors nor by practitioner-relevant research. They see no need to keep abreast of research developments and rightly regard journals as being directed to fellow academics, not to them.

In Lawn and Ozga's (1988) terms, teachers are subconsciously supporting the concept of 'non-professional professionals'. The change to that point of view is discussed in Chapter 9. One of the major tasks facing me at St John's in my role of Professional Development Manager is to change the culture of the staff to a more research based philosophy. What the staff see at the moment is that research takes up a great deal of time that they feel they can ill afford on top of the existing pressures of the job. One of my tasks is to convince them of the benefits to their teaching of the data achieved from small scale research, and the benefits to them personally from undertaking that research. Once again, the journey is as important as the destination.

Another argument put forward by Hargreaves (1996:4) is:

Advances in medicine are made by leading practitioners who are for this reason deeply respected by juniors – and trusted by their patients. In education by stark contrast, we have de-coupled promotion from both practitioner expertise and knowledge of research. A Headteacher or Professor of Education though perhaps formerly an outstanding practitioner, rarely has regular teaching duties in a school. Teachers get transformed by promotion into managers, administrators or academics and lack the deep respect junior doctors show for their seniors.

It is vital for the health of the teaching profession that this mindset is altered. The teacher researcher must be encouraged to be alive and well in the school, and more importantly, if this can be achieved, then the fruits of that research must be disseminated as widely as possible. The next step is to create an environment where such data is absorbed into teaching strategies. This is a process that requires the management of change, has been addressed in Chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9.

The Government is now fully supporting the concept of teacher researchers and they have made funding available via the Higher Education Funding Council for England, the Economic Research Council, the Department for Education and Employment, the National Foundation for Educational Research and the Teacher Training Agency (TTA). The TTA has analysed the current research situation and noted that there are too few projects that focus on classroom teaching or involve classroom teacher activity in the research process. Too much research stops short of working out the meaning of research findings for day-to-day practice; and the traditional vehicles for reporting findings are not geared sufficiently to the needs of practitioners. If this is the case, then an improvement in the situation can only enhance both the status of the teacher and the activities that take place in the classroom. The 'Performance Management Structure' with its emphasis on performance related pay put into operation for experienced teachers in 2000 might encourage more reflective classroom practice in order to provide the necessary evidence base for that process. This might however be a double-edged sword as it might also provide a barrier to whole school development as collaboration might be threatened.

In Ontario, this nettle has already been grasped. Delong and Widemen (1996: 1) note that schools in the state are already involved in teacher research:

In collaboration with others, teachers collect information about the effectiveness of their practice, analyse the information, and draw conclusions about what parts of the programme are working and where improvement is needed. This kind of investigation involves teachers in a personal reflective process that includes clarifying their values about learning and analysing how their behaviour and the results of that behaviour correspond to these values.

It is my belief that many teachers are as part of their practice already involved in the Action Research, they just don't realise it. MacLure (1996:281) supports this '***people become Action Researchers by having always been, in some protean sense, Action Researchers***'. The good practitioner has always questioned the success or failure of his/her lessons. Has always reflected and adapted to improve, has always had the performance of his/her pupils at the front of his/her mind at assessment time. To this end, he/she is already a teacher researcher. What has to happen now is that the results of that reflection and the depth of the investigations need to be disseminated and deepened. We must move from the natural self-consciousness of humility and inward looking to the confidence of producing data that we recognise is worthy of sharing.

My task then is to find as many opportunities as possible where this can happen for all staff and the journey along that road is again inter-woven in the commentary.

My journey with the pupils

Over the period of this research, I have had constant contact with pupils from all parts of the school through the initiatives introduced to raise achievement. I have used the pupil voices as a record of their feelings on numerous occasions throughout the thesis and the effect that other teachers and I have on these pupils is both recorded and evaluated. The pupils are central to my research process, and Rudduck's (1996) concept of using and involving them as a means of triangulation and as a source of data is crucial. Their comments during the work with the outstanding teacher Alan Shelton, their assistance with the middle ability learning initiative, their contribution to the Yr. 10 and Yr. 11 Mentoring Project add both weight and validity to what the school is attempting to do. They are an important evaluation tool in the measurement of success or failure in the improvement process. Their part in this partnership research process has both guided and changed outlook and action within the school. Both their Action Research journeys and mine with them, through the initiatives is documented, and their oral evidence adds to the data from other sources to give the reader a feel that they are part of the process. They are definitely being involved as part of the research methodology, not just being researched upon. The IQEA project, Hopkins *et al* (1994: 128) were keen advocates of the importance of using pupil views.

Throughout the project we have tried to involve students. Initially we were concerned to give them information about our work. However their contribution developed far beyond that originally intended, and they have taken on a variety of roles as: Monitors of the classroom impact of the project. Year 9 pupils were asked to complete an initial questionnaire and a follow up questionnaire in June 1992. The aim of this exercise was to detect any shift in pupils' perception of how they learned.

Soo Hoo (1993) recognised the importance not only of using pupil's voices, but of working with them to implement the ideas that are articulated by those voices. This sort of partnership is now further encouraged and strengthened by Southworth and Lincoln (1999:118). In their research they cite Thiessen (1997) who took the work of pupils and engaged at three levels, '*learning about pupil perspectives, acting on behalf of pupils and working with pupil perspectives*'. They suggested that working with pupils and acting on what is being said strengthens the learning partnership. Even more recently, Fielding (2001) has cited pupils as being '*radical change agents*'. This moves the concept of pupil inclusion from just hearing pupil voices to that of co-agents of change. Currently (2002), the school is embarking on a school wide initiative which embraces the importance of Fielding's (2001) work recognising the validity of the pupil perspective, and is developing a specific school policy which will formally recognise pupil involvement as part of future

developmental processes. I have tried throughout this thesis to indicate this central role and the value I have placed on pupils. Their contribution is a cornerstone of the thesis and I hope that the reader appreciates the value I have placed on their journey and their contributions as the text is read.

Appendix 8

The diary records of the improvement initiatives and school life 1996 - 1998

The start of the diary recordings

Story 1

The story started in October 1995 and the initial development has been recorded in Chapter

1. The following entries continue the story.

12.6.96 Conference on Raising Achievement. I attended a course in Sheffield on Raising Achievement. The main thrust of the conference encompassed the idea that in order to raise the achievement level of any child, the teacher had to have constant and direct contact with that child. In order to achieve this, the teacher had to be guided in classroom organisational terms to create time in the classroom to achieve this contact.

24.6.96 First Term Reviews. DXG and I had a meeting on 24.6.96 about the place that First Term Reviews (FTR) had in the process of raising achievement. At the moment, FTR are used just as a snapshot image of what the pupil has achieved during the first term of the current school year. The suggestion after our meeting was that this document could be put to much more valuable use by both the staff and the pupils if it was structured slightly differently. It could be used for target setting for the future.

27.6.96 Conference on School Self Review. I attended a conference in Birmingham on the concept of School Self Review. The idea was developed by Rotherham Education Committee and revolves around the concept of the school and the staff undertaking a process of rigorous evaluation and re-evaluation of its performance on a regular (annual) basis.

1.7.96 SMT Review Meeting of Development Plans 1996. At this meeting subject and the pastoral area plans for raising of achievement were reviewed. These development plans are the plans to be implemented during the academic year 1996/7. These Department Development Plans were linked to the Whole School Development Plan and to the OFSTED Action Plan.

1.7.96 The minutes of the Lower School Pastoral Committee record an entry where a pupil in Yr. 7 had for the first time been put onto an Individual Education Plan (IEP) as a direct result of low self esteem as measured by KMP a month earlier.

2.7.96 Second meeting between MAB and KMP with reference to self-esteem testing. After KMP had produced the information from the 7Y self-esteem tests, she produced a list of teachers who would be prepared to help with the using of the material. MAB/KMP need to invite them to support the programme of using the tests before Pencelli starts in November. The idea being that the Form Tutors can use the information from the self-esteem tests to make an initial assessment of the pupils in their tutor groups. Then, during the outdoor pursuits residential week at Pencelli and during the debriefing sessions afterward, they will be able to see how closely the test scores are to the reality of the pupils in the field.

5.7.96 The Yr. 7 tutor team met to discuss the new 1996/7 intake, and the minutes from the meeting show that for the first time self esteem was included into the folder of work to be covered during the induction days for these pupils.

22.7.96 I met with SHR who is keen to set up a working party in the school to develop a literacy and Oracy policy and a scheme to get that policy integrated into all departments. In addition, she hopes to develop a whole school spelling policy. I suggested she joined the Raising Achievement Working Party and the Deputy Head Curriculum strongly supported this move. During the Autumn Term 1996 this new initiative will get under way and will be of help to all pupils in raising their level of performance.

24.7.96. IBR is undertaking some in-depth work on the aspect of bullying in the school. Again the link is that if bullying is reduced, pupils will be able to concentrate more on their academic work. The raising of self-esteem, self concept and assertiveness levels will also contribute to the reduction of the bullying problem. IBR is to join the Raising Achievement Working Party next term to report on his work.

The end of the Summer Term 1996

Reflections

I see this as the end of the preliminary part of my research. It is a diary of developments that have occurred in the school over the past year and some ideas that have occurred to me as these developments have happened. The scene has been set and my thoughts to date are:

1. There is scope for a great deal of development in the area.
2. The strength of that development will come from the summation of the individual efforts of members of the working party on raising achievement.
3. That the whole school will become involved in this over time, with data initially being generated at individual level, moving through to 1:1 contact with the subject teacher or Form Tutor. This in turn will have an effect on the workings of all departments, which in turn will direct the school through the next development cycle.
4. On the way existing processes like assessment, reporting, recording at departmental and subject teacher level will have to change.
5. More attention will have to be paid to the Year 6 cohort prior to their coming to the school. The school may require more or different information in the transfer document to that which it currently receives, and this will have to be negotiated with the Headteachers of the primary feeder schools.
6. A new tier of tests is to be put into place in the lower school to continue the data collection process, and this data will then have to be related to present performance of the pupils.
7. I will have to keep careful records of the changes that take place over time and if possible, measure the effect of those changes on the performance of the pupils.

My learning has already shown to me that the power of co-operation and personal involvement, by me, pays dividends. There is an increased interest and willingness from many more staff to the concept of raising achievement because someone else is undertaking the groundwork and the outcomes and advantages are becoming clearer. Some of the Action Research cycles identified here are still at the planning stage, others have already moved onto the implementation stage.

The Story Part 2 September 1996

3.9.96 Self- Esteem Tests. On the first day of the new term, I had a conversation with KMP re the results of the self-esteem tests carried out in June. She has published a list of pupils in Yr. 7 who have low esteem. This has been put on the staff notice boards, and

already, form tutors from Year 7 have taken note and have started to work with those particular pupils.

3.9.96 PKH at the SMT meeting asked me to be the SMT member responsible for the area for raising standards of achievement.

4.9.96. SHR and MAB meet to discuss the next steps in Sue's '*Literacy in the Curriculum Project*'. We discussed the management of this. There are some internal politics involved in this. The HOD has not been very willing to contribute to the debate, although it is clear to many that English is the cornerstone from which a policy in both spelling and reading should emerge.

My management plans for these issues

Step 1. Sue's relationship with HOD is not totally sound, and so I felt that her first move must be to discuss with the HOD the whole issue. This she did and has achieved agreement to continue. In fact the English Department is running a parallel project just in English. The HOD is presenting this as his own initiative. The HOD spoke to me about this development to which I gave my support and encouragement.

Step 2. Sue to speak to MXW to establish full support from the Curriculum Deputy and then speak to PKH to gain support from the Head. This she did having presented copies of her proposal and time scale.

Step 3. Sue and I agreed that the next step was for me to get the chair of the working party to include a report on progress. From there Sue will set up her sub working party and get the project under way. In addition, the chair is to raise the issue at the next academic committee meeting so that all of the HODs are aware of its existence.

4.9.96 T.V.E.I Embedded Project. The school already has two members of staff, EXB and GGS taking part in this initiative on raising achievement. It is organised by Bath University and is funded by some remnants from T.V.E.I funding. Two more HODs are keen to join - BMW and TEP. The school made a decision at SMT meeting to fund one more place if there was not sufficient funding within the existing system. Both HODs have stated that they will work on their developments even if they don't get onto the scheme. It does seem healthy that there are now two subjects, Maths and Science out of the three core

subjects involved in the scheme. (English should also be involved, but the HOD has presented no paper or ideas or shown any great willingness to be involved.). This is an interesting adjunct to my meeting with SHR on the same day.

4.9.96 MAB gave to PKH at his request documentation of the raising achievement and research work achieved work so far.

5.9.96. MAB gave to MXW a copy of the classroom management guide written by MAB for her to review.

6.9.96 The above is returned, with the suggestion that its existence is made known at the raising achievement working party. Several copies are produced for the staff library in both buildings for consultation as required.

6.9.96 MAB meets with MXW to discuss the strategy for the ongoing development of the working party. This is presenting problems because the chair EXB does not seem to have many ideas, and I feel that I am pushing from behind. This is a management strategy on my behalf as the continuation of the work is dependent on the survival of that group. I suggested to MXW that the next step is to get all parties who are working on any of the projects to give a paper and report to the next meeting, and from then on regular updated reports are given. It is crucial that all the enthusiasm that is present at the moment continues. One problem emerging is, there is no overall picture of the developments that are taking place, and which parts of the school are involved. It is crucial that this is co-ordinated if we are to prevent duplication of work or leave obvious holes.

6.9.96 MAB meets with SMH to discuss the part that MAB can have in the CAT testing for Year 7. Dates and times to be suggested by SMH.

12.9.96 MAB had a discussion with GGS about the factors that may be having an effect on the achievement of the middle ability pupils. The following factors emerge as a result of the discussion:

a. Vocabulary. The vocabulary that teachers use may affect how they view the situation with the learning experiences of their classes, and therefore how they react to those situations.

b. Group ethos. A powerful tool recognised by GGS in raising achievement. This has been exemplified this year with a second set maths group taught by ANS. In Maths groups taught by other teachers, a pupil may say “ I didn’t do my homework last night, but it doesn’t matter because lots of other people didn’t either”. In some groups this may be accepted by the group as acceptable behaviour, and may be even accepted by the teacher. However in the maths group stated, a different ethos had been engendered. In this group, the vast majority of the group did their homework on each occasion. In this atmosphere such a statement as the one above would not be made as it would clearly not be acceptable to the group. Teacher pressure has clearly a part to play in the development of this ethos, together with teacher expectation for performance.

A researcher’s note

1. As a manager, the idea of teacher expectation in relationship to the performance of the group must therefore be explored. I must also look at the particularly successful teachers (ANS in particular) to see what they are saying and doing which has such an effect on their groups to make them perform better in class, and exams, than other groups.
2. (Jan 1999) this entry was made before the work with Alan Shelton had been undertaken, and is a significant entry. It is from such information as this that the decision to make a singularity study of Alan was made. Alan in particular has produced outstanding G.C.S.E results this year for a second set Maths group. 18 Grade Bs, 3Cs and 1 D. This is not the normal distribution for this type of group. What did he do with his group this year, that was so different?

12.9.96 T.V.E.I Maths Embedded Project meeting with Kate Bullock from Bath and GGS. GGS to give a progress report to Kate having introduced some innovations into the school. The summary from that meeting:

The maths department recognised that the ‘Green Scheme’ for lower ability maths pupils in Year 10 was not now achieving the desired effect of raising self esteem and performance for less able mathematicians. The Department therefore set out to devise a scheme that would provide a more motivating scheme for the less able. This brings to the end a cycle, evaluation has taken place and re-planning produces a new scheme.

The new scheme has been introduced into the current (1996-7) Year 10 less able groups. The current Year 11 pupils will remain on the Green Scheme. This will help as a crude measure of the effectiveness of the new scheme as the pupil make up of the groups remains

similar. The essence of this scheme is that it has employed different styles of teaching, different approaches to the subject and different books and resources. This will enable the pupils to start in a stimulated way. The staff involved have all been part of the development of this new scheme, and are therefore fully committed to it. The spin off from this development is that it has motivated the staff, improved communication within the department and this enthusiasm has overflowed onto the pupils. The scheme was started on day one of the new academic year 1996/7.

Success criteria for the scheme

When asked what the success criteria for the scheme would be, GGS explained that improved behaviour (measured by the number of behaviour referrals made to her as HOD), GCSE results as measured against last year (are they the same as last year or better?), and attendance at lessons, (or less absenteeism/truancy which could indicate a measure of increased interest in the lessons). Finally, the GCSE results could be compared with the Year 9 SAT results together with the value added factors to see if there was a difference from previous years.

There has been no feedback of any success as yet as the term is only 3 weeks old, but ongoing reviews will take place. The SMT support the scheme as they have funded some of the resources, and encouraged the department to become involved with the project in the first place.

18.9.96 Raising Achievement Working Party Meeting 3 takes place.

Progress Reports on the following initiatives are given by the project leaders. Behaviour GBD, Project 25 (later renamed project 50) JRB, Emerging Yr. 10 Grades JRB, Raising achievement of middle ability pupils MAB, Self-esteem and low ability KMP, Literacy and reading SHR. After these reports came the item on new initiatives for the Working Party to be aware of. They are as follows:

1. Underachieving Boys: The English Department is particularly interested in this group and feel that their area of research in reading and spelling will help this group. As there are a few single sex groups in English (it's happened by chance) it will be an ideal opportunity to explore some of the research on single sex and achievement.

2. Drama: KXH has used drama as a medium for raising self-esteem and maintaining it. KXH to add to the guidance booklet produced by MAB.

24.9.96 I have arranged to meet with ANS to discuss his teaching style.

24.9.96 I interviewed Annie Martin and Shane Morton of Yr. 12 about their feelings regarding ANS as a teacher, what positive and negative attributes he has and what makes him a good teacher.

25.9.96 Met with Jack Whitehead to discuss progress so far.

26.9.96 I met with Nicholas Butler who has now left the school to discuss the same aspects as the interview above to try and triangulate the feelings of the maths group.

30.9.96 The Literacy working party met for the first time under the chair of SHR.

8.10.96 I attended a meeting with DXG and SMH to discuss how the school could best make use of the CAT scores. This is to be used during the SDD of 16.10.96.

8.10.96 I gave ANS a copy of his interview to read, make comments on and amend as necessary. He was happy with what he read and did not require any alterations to the text to be made. I also gave Annie, Shane and Nick a copy with the same intention. They did make some amendments and these were incorporated into the version as now reported.

9.10.96 I met with GGS Head of Maths to discuss the 'Just him factor'. (See the Alan Shelton Good Teacher study in Chapter 6).

11.10.96 Started to prepare presentation for SDD on CAT results and usage.

13.10.96 Wrote up pen portraits of my perception of the Raising Achievement Working Party personnel (**Appendix 3**).

15.10.96 Met with Jack Whitehead, Jen Russ and Moira Laidlaw to discuss progress so far.

16.10.96 Staff Development Day. Delivered the work on the CAT scores to the whole

staff.

17.10.96 I started to ask colleagues if they would be part of a school validation group for my research. MXW, EXB, GGS, were happy to be involved.

17.10.96 I had a meeting with MPP Head of English to hear about his department's work in literature and literacy in English. This is a separate group from the SHR group. I also had an update from Sue on her group's activities. At this time DPR is carrying out an audit of reading activities from all departments.

17.10.96 I spoke to both BT and IBR to see if they would be interested in forming a Research self help group in the school. BT is doing a Ph.D at Reading, and IBR is doing an MEd in Gloucester. Both expressed an interest and a willingness to take part and it was agreed that we would meet after Christmas.

18.10.96 I had a meeting with IBR to give me an update on his bullying research. He sees it continuing for a longer period than he had anticipated as he is finding strong evidence of bullying in the school. In addition to bullying, Ian has been asked by the Head to chair a committee on Racism that is connected to bullying in the school.

21.10.96 I arranged for another interview with ANS to explore the basis of his teaching and personal values further. We met on 22.10.96

6.11.96 Yr. 9 took the 1996 CAT tests.

7.11.96 Arranged to meet with KXH to discuss how Drama could raise self-esteem for both pupils and teachers and how it could be incorporated into my teachers' guide.

10.11.96 Took the first video of ANS at work with his Yr. 10 set 2 Maths group. This first video is of him working on an individual level with the group who are doing project work. I intend to video him later, undertaking a more didactic lesson.

13.11.96 I had a second meeting with KXH to discuss the details of her drama work. She agreed to complete her entry for my guide, by Christmas 1996.

14.11.96 I attended a meeting with the Deputy Head Curriculum and Deputy Head Pastoral to discuss the content of the next SDD on 30.1.97. The focus for the day will be 'Raising Achievement for the Middle Ability Children' with particular reference to Year 7.

15.11.96 I arranged for members of the Yr. 10 maths set to review the video and give me their impressions of ANS as a teacher.

15.11.96 DPR expressed an interest in my work and agreed to act as a second colleague who would be videoed. This is particularly useful as he also teaches Maths so I will be able to collect data of a reasonably similar nature to that of Alan Shelton's.

19.11.96 Review of video as suggested on 15.11.96 took place with 7 members of the Yr. 10 group present.

3.12.96 Took the second video of ANS teaching a didactic lesson.

3.12.96 I asked the SIMS operator in school to produce the statistical history and evidence for the Maths Department and for ANS's groups in particular to try and contextualise the exam performance of the set 2 Yr. 11 group of 1996.

5.12.96 Arranged to have an update meeting with KMP on self-esteem.

10.12.96 Met with KMP.

10.12.96 I had a meeting with Jo Glasson one of the Novice teachers from Bath University who has an interest in researching an aspect of self-esteem for her Educational Study. I have commissioned her to investigate the effect that the Yr. 7 residential trip to Pencelli had on self-esteem, measuring it against the results of the tests completed in June 1996 and the subsequent reviews made by the Form Tutors using that data. This work will take place in January 1997.

17.12.96 I videoed Darren Rogan teaching a didactic lesson to his Yr. 11 set 2 group.

19.12.96 I had another meeting regarding the input session for SDD 30.1.97. SMH has just received the Yr. 9 CAT tests and feels that in the light of these results, perhaps the

emphasis for the day should be towards helping the middle achievers in Yr. 9 rather than as originally intended Yr. 7.

21.12.96 SMT Received a demonstration of the software called 'Success Maker'. This package had been discussed much earlier in the year at the working party for raising achievement, but at that time the SMT decided that it would be too expensive to purchase. With a new Headteacher, different spending priorities are now being considered and this package now becomes a possibility again. While it is primarily for those with learning difficulties, there are clear indications of its success from local schools that have used it to indicate that it would also be an appropriate tool for the middle ability child as well. The decision for purchase will be considered in the New Year and if accepted, the implementation will be included in the 1997/8 Development Plan for the school.

30.12.96 For my supervisors at the University I produced papers on the outstanding areas of work using data collected throughout the term and decided to take time to review progress made so far and to plan for the next research steps. It seems important to me at this stage to draw a spider diagram of where the school has got to so far and to start to research some of the basic ideas behind the research like 'What does middle ability mean to teachers at my school?' 'How can the videos I have taken be used to enhance my knowledge of what makes a good teacher good?'

The end of the Christmas Term 1996: Many of the cycles are now in the implementation stage, with some moving into the evaluation phase.

Story 3 Work in the school from January 1997

6.1.97. The school hits a level of despondency; the Year 9 CAT results have just arrived. They are much more detailed than last year and hold massive amounts of prognostic information about estimated grades at GCSE. A quick analysis of this data has shown to the SMT and the Curriculum and Pupil Support Department (CAPS) that the school's percentage of pupils expected to achieve 5 GCSE grades at C or above is only 36%. This is a potentially disastrous situation for the pupils. Such a low estimated performance at GCSE would have a dramatic effect on their career prospects. The school recognised that some remedial improvement strategies had to be put into place to help these pupils achieve more than they were being predicted. If the prediction of a low performance materialises, it will

be difficult for the school because at the current time we are operating at a level of 55% to 58% of pupils achieving these grades.

Also from the data, there appears to be a large group of pupils in the high 'average' group i.e. potential GCSE grade D candidates. This is the group of pupils that the school will need to identify very clearly and start intervention work, in order to move them onto a grade 'C' and therefore alter the low percentage prediction. It is important that we start work now in order to have sufficient time to bring about a significant change in achievement. Later on that day, the Year 7 CAT results arrived, and were analysed. The prognoses for the estimated grades for this group is 43% A* - C but of course they are much further away from the examination in terms of time, and the school has had little time to exert any 'Value Added' influence on them. (They took the tests in November 1996, 3 months after joining the school.)

6.1.97 Information and guidance on the interpretation of the CAT results are circulated to all HOD / I/C subjects / KS Co-ordinators.

9.1.97 During the SMT meeting on this day, some of the issues raised above were discussed and it was decided that the situation was so serious that a full-blown analysis of the situation was needed, and that a full meeting devoting all attention to this one item was required. To this meeting will be invited the HOD for CAPS and the Year 9 Head of Year. This meeting is to take place on 13.1.97.

10.1.97 MAB meets with KMP to discuss the progress on self-esteem and the inter-linking with the CAT results. KMP has started to analyse the Year 7 CAT results, and to integrate them with the previous work done on self-esteem in order to start the validation process and to alert the Form Tutors to any problems in their Tutor Groups.

13. 1.97 The CAT results are an item at the SMT meeting of this date. Concern on the effect that these results will have on the pupils and the school, if they are allowed to happen, are discussed, and a list of actions is drawn up which may help to raise these standards.

GBD and SMH are at the meeting and these two together with MAB are charged with developing some further strategies to help with the problem.

14.1.97 The Raising Achievement Working Party meets and each member on his or her area of development gives a progress report. A definite development plan is written for the future as this has now been adopted as a major school issue.

20.1.97 MAB meets with GBD to work on the task given at the SMT meeting of 14.1.97. The outcome of these deliberations is two papers produced as handouts for the staff.

20.1.97 SMT meet later that day and MAB/GBD give an up date on their deliberations. During the same meeting SHR gives input from the Literacy Working Party. PKH asks MAB to lead the staff on the SDD on 30.1.97, and create a paper to help staff to understand how we can action the *Raising of Achievement*. GBD is given the task of writing a paper specifically on *Raising Achievement for Year 9 pupils*.

21.1.97 DXG and SMH meet to discuss how best to display the CAT results in a teacher friendly and usable fashion, and to create 'Case Study' scenarios to show as exemplars of how different groups of staff might use the data. These are to be used during MAB's session on the SDD.

21.1.97 CAT results are discussed as requested at all Department meetings. The idea being that all departments are to send a representative to MAB's session on SDD and should come prepared with some ideas of how each department would like to use the CAT results and in what format they would like them produced.

21.1.97 MAB meets with KMP to discuss the various graphs she has produced for the Year 7 CAT results. In addition she had produced a composite table of data for each TG amalgamating CATs, SATs, and C.A.P.S information. In addition, KMP has recorded the steps necessary to create the records the pastoral team may need to use. We also discussed the progress of Jo Glasson in looking at self-esteem post Pencelli.

23.1.97 SHR produces a '*Guide to English Attainment at KS3*' This was to be circulated to all departments so that all staff were aware of what standards of written English they could expect from pupils who had attained different KS levels. This was so that staff could be more insistent about the quality of work and raise standards by asking pupils to repeat work below that of which they are capable. This paper will help to raise the achievement of underachievers in particular.

27.1.97 SMT met to discuss the final arrangements for SDD.

30.1.97 Staff Development Day takes place.

31.1.97 One of the factors raised during the SDD was the issue of setting and the formation of Tutor Groups in Year 7. MAB and MBM agree to meet to discuss the issue further after half term.

31.1.97 MAB agrees to meet with MPP and ABC to discuss their concerns over the CAT data.

Half Term.

25.2.97 MAB talks to KMP about the next steps in producing the CAT data in the format that staff require it. KMP has gained the agreement of the S.D.O that administrative time can be allocated to the task and the cost of this taken from the central funding. This will be a major item for the future and the systems need to be developed and established now. The greatest implications are the ways in which the raw data from CATs and SATs are recorded and logged on the SIMS system.

26.2.97 MAB meets with RNO to discuss how the CATs data can be gathered into the format required by staff, and to ask him to put the raw data on the Computer Network in Teacher only files so that individuals or Departments who have the skills can extract the data in whatever format they would like it.

4.3.97 CATS data for Year 9 & Year 7 1997 is now on the Network. The composite format is a problem. The SATs data is only on hard copy and cannot therefore be transferred onto disc unless it is entered into the system. There will now be a delay while this happens. This is not good, as the staff will lose interest if we are not careful.

4.3.97 MAB produces a Post SDD Newsletter to keep all staff informed of developments

5.3.97 KMP issues an analysis of the CAT data for Year 9 and 7 after the Form Tutors have completed their Performance Reviews

10.3.97 SMT hold another long discussion on the Raising of Achievement in the School and its implications. It is decided that it must be a full school initiative for the next academic year and must be an item on all Development Plans. It is to be a high profile area and will be further discussed after the Easter holidays.

10.3.97 The Literacy Working Party holds its next meeting.

11.3.97 SDD News letter issued to all teaching staff.

12.3.97 DPR given the script for the video MAB took of him in action with his group in December. His brief is to review it and make his own interpretation of what he sees. MAB has already as part of the script put his interpretation on it. Darren will then show it to the Maths set for the pupil interpretation.

13.3.97. MXW expresses concern to MAB that the behaviour strategy for extraction of poorly behaved Year 9 pupils has not been put into operation yet. She produces a paper for all staff. SMT is to have a purge after Easter for 2 weeks.

14.3.97 MAB meets with MBM and SMH as agreed on 31.1 97 to discuss the implications of Tutor Groups and Setting using CAT results.

14.3.97. SDD The focus for this day is Review of Development Plans 1996/7 and writing Development Plans for 1997/8. All departments work on Raising Achievement and write it into their development plans.

14.3.97 Met with SHR to discuss the next stage in the development of the Literacy Working policy.

19.3.97 DPR showed his class the video taken in December. He asked the class for their interpretation of what they saw and recorded their comments on the script. He felt that they were pleased to be involved in the process.

19.3.97 Met with KMP to arrange the next meeting. She also gave me an update on progress on the C.A.Ts data.

19.3.97 Talked to GGS about departmental INSET. It would seem that videoing teachers at work in the classroom has caught the imagination of ANS and DPR and DPR in particular now wants to lead the department in some INSET based on the use of video evidence as a learning tool. GGS is very happy on two fronts, that DPR should be coming out of his shell and taking an active part in the life of the department, and secondly that they should be using this form of material as a new venture.

19.3.97 Full staff meeting to discuss the financial situation of the school and the need for redundancies.

Easter holidays

7.4.97 I start my new responsibilities as the Staff Development Co-ordinator.

7.4.97 The Year 9 Blitz starts.

9.4.97 Second consultative staff meeting on the issue of redundancies.

10.4.97 Meet with Headteacher to discuss staff development. During the conversation I confirm that I will be encouraging the staff to become teacher researchers and the Head is fully in favour.

17.4.97 Carry out the interview with Philip.

18.4.97 End of the Year 9 blitz.

21.4.97 The update on the CATs information is circulated to HOD and SMT.

21.4.97 Carry out the interview with Alex Taylor, the second middle ability Year 11 pupil.

25.4.97 Bath Trainee's report received on her evaluation of Pencelli and the value of the school's self-esteem tests.

Story 4 May 1997

This part of the diary starts at the beginning of May 1997. By this time, the school and the staff have started to recover from the bombshell of the redundancy issue, and those who

are continuing to work at the school next year are starting to talk positively about the future. It would seem that two types of thought process are taking place. One is that, those staying can now start to make positive plans for the September Term. A fresh look is being given to the management of the various systems used by the school because the staff who have managed or carried out many of these systems in the past will have left. As a result, new management systems are to be put into place. This is in line with the Headteacher's management structure for a flatter more horizontal arrangement. He had plans for this as the future of the school anyway, but the redundancy issue has brought those plans forward by a number of years. This flatter structure is to give decision-making autonomy to a wider number of staff who will then be responsible for their actions and decisions, together with the monitoring and evaluation of systems they put into place.

The second thought process is that as a result of the redundancies, there are 22 responsibility points available to the remaining staff. This will in essence give a considerable number of staff career opportunities that were not available before, and has motivated those people to think positively and be prepared to take on activities that were other staff's responsibilities before. I intend to capitalise on this enthusiasm and instigate activities I have been unable to get into place in the '*slough of despond*' that existed before Easter.

7.5.97 School Management Group now called the Management, Evaluation and Strategy Team (M.E.S.T) meets for the first time. This is one of the new groups formed under the revised management structure.

19.5.97 MAB talks to the Headteacher about the role of the Development Co-ordinator. At this point there is a dramatic change in the story line. The Headteacher corrected the title to that of Professional Development Manager. This puts a totally different emphasis on the role. Gone now is the concept of gentle persuasion and delicate suggestion to colleagues about appropriate developments that they might like to consider, and in comes a more proactive emphasis. I am interpreting the word manager as a process whereby there is a much greater degree of pressure to be brought to bear on individuals to undertake training and development and an implicit requirement for me to actively manage the whole process which will require both monitoring and evaluation.

20.5.97 MAB meets with KMP to review the C.A.Ts work and self esteem work to date, and to plan for the next steps. Overall it would seem that the tests were fairly accurate in their predictions and useful enough for the Form Tutors to have worked with the children at risk helping to raise their self-esteem over the year. Pencelli seems to permanently change and raise the pupils' self esteem and has altered the relationship between the pupils who went to the centre and the staff who attended with a very positive bond which overflows into classroom work.

22.5.97 PKH issues his strategy framework for all staff. Action Research is now included in MAB's job description.

22.5.97 MAB has a tutorial with Jack Whitehead at Bath

22.5.97 MAB talks to a number of staff who are engaged in various forms of research and then decides to formulate an **Action Research Group** in the school. The invitation paper is written and is circulated to all interested members. BT is particularly keen to be a part of this group and volunteers to lead part of the session by preparing the group in the reading of 'Research Papers'. The necessary arrangements are made to meet immediately after half term.

24.5.97 Half Term

2.6.97. The initial meeting of the school based Action Research Group is held. Five colleagues attended and the apologies from the remainder lead me to believe that it will be a viable group.

2.6.97. PKH confirms with me that the Governors have agreed that I will be called the Assistant Headteacher, together with the pay and conditions of service equal to the post.

4.6.97 PKH addresses all of the staff both teaching and non-teaching and firms up the staffing structure and his plans for the future. He is still willing to hear any more points of view before he sets it in concrete. There are still some staff who feel aggrieved about the structure, but I do feel now that more staff are feeling happy, and conversations are happening about how they personally feel excited about the start of term in September. What is clear is, the staff who are going are now beginning to inflict a psychological hold

on progress. No one including myself wants the two deputies in particular to feel that their organisations were anything but successful, but at the same time those of us who are remaining wish to do the tasks in different ways. As a consequence, I find myself in particular making interim plans until September when they have left in order to bring about the new organisations.

4.6.97 I have approached SJS to be chair of the school Numeracy Working Party. This is a big job, and will give SJS a whole school initiative. I have discussed this with GGS HOD and we both feel that SJS is right for this job. She needs a new focus as she is not being successful at interview, she is a very capable Mathematician and she needs to improve her interpersonal skills. She is delighted to be asked, and positively blossoms at the thought.

6.6.97 Kate Bullock and Felicity Wikeley from Bath University visit the school to undertake an evaluation of the T.V.E.I embedded Project second tranche, Technology and Science.

9.6.97 DPR has been doing some small-scale research into pupil attitudes to Mathematics in Year 9.

10.6.97 The first group of the next Year 7 cohort visits the school for their induction visit. They are given the self-esteem tests by KMP.

11.6.97 MAB and PKH meet with David Hemery to discuss staff development. David is a consultant in the field of team building and PKH is keen to work on the new staff curriculum co-ordinators and the directors of subjects.

12.6.97 IBR meets with MAB to discuss the outcomes of his research on ethos with Years 9 and 10.

13.6.97 SJS calls a meeting to discuss the framework of the Numeracy WP. It shows how it combines with the Maths Department Development Plan.

17 & 18.6.97 Interviews for all of the major Directorates and the three Curriculum Co-ordinators vacancies are held. The new teams are forming and there is a change of atmosphere in the staff room moving from despondency to excitement for the future.

18.6.97 MAB discusses with PKH the need for staff professional reviews to be held annually. This need has emerged from the interviews of the previous day. PKH agrees, and they are to be put into the framework of the new staff development guidelines to all staff.

18.6.97 MAB and EXB discuss the current use of C.A.Ts. It is agreed that they are held on disc in a very unfriendly way and are of little help to the subject teacher in their present form. EXB and his department need the information on Year 9 pupils now in order to put them into the appropriate sets for Business Studies and it is difficult to do this with the data in its present form. MAB is to talk again with RNO. Things have not moved forward at all since the SDD in January. This is a great disappointment to me.

18.6.97. There is a general feeling of buoyancy amongst the staff. CWD quotes '*the staff are feeling bullish*'. 20 of the staff have new posts of responsibility and this will be very helpful to the school in driving it forward. Both GGS and ANS have told me separately how much they value the appointment of the new Curriculum Co-ordinators team and how successful they feel this team will be. There is great concern particularly from the Lower School Pastoral Team about the appointment of AJP as the Head of Lower School. Some of this, I feel sure, is a feeling of being upset because they did not get the job, but there is I think a feeling of personal enmity against the man. This is another major management issue to be resolved if the school is to settle down and move foreword. MAB has agreed to work with ANS to 'soften the blow'.

18.6.97 At a meeting between MBM and PKH regarding his contact with the primary feeder schools, the Head has given a clear indication that the primary schools may now be more receptive to undertaking the CAT scores earlier in Year 6. This will be of great use to St John's as the data they provide can be used to greater effect in placement of pupils when they enter the school.

19.6.97 MAB arranges a meeting date with EJB about PDPs.

26.6.97 MAB meets with Jack Whitehead at school to discuss progress.

26.6.97 EXB and Jack hold a conversation about research. This is significant because it indicates that staff are now beginning to be involved in the concept of individual research as learners and it's the start I hope of bigger things.

26.6.97 MAB arranges a meeting with Jen Russ to get the school improvement angle on the research.

26.6.97 CWD volunteers to serve on the Staff Development Day (SDD) working party. Further evidence of an increased willingness to be involved. CWD is noted for his lack of input to such activities in the past.

26.6.97 The Governors Staff Development Committee (The old INSET committee) meets and the main item on the agenda is to consider the applications from 6 staff who have applied for financial funding for their professional development. This is significant, as there were only two requests last year. Such personal professional development is being encouraged by the Head and falls in line with the work of the researcher Hargreaves (1992) as the '*teacher researcher*'. No decision is reached and the committee agrees to meet again on 1.7.97.

30.6.97 SDD - MAB has planned it. At the start of the day MAB praised the staff involved for their impressive performance at the recent interviews. This is a considered act of management by MAB to keep the current buoyant feeling going.

30.6.97 The Management, Strategy and Evaluation Team meet with David Hemery to hear his presentation on coaching as a means of team building. A good meeting, I come away feeling inspired. Another meeting is arranged for 7.7.97 to continue the input.

30.6.97 I note the continuing feel of enthusiasm from the staff and conversations that indicate that most staff are looking forward to the start of the Autumn Term.

1.7.97 EXB informs me he wishes to volunteer to be part of the appraisal development working party. Once again, a member of staff volunteering for a job which would not have happened 4 months ago.

2.7.97 MAB and KJS attend the Funding Agency for Schools (FAS) to hear of the latest developments in the Government's statutory requirement for Target Setting which comes out as a White Paper on 7.7.97 and is to be imposed in 1998.

3.7.97 MAB has a meeting with EJB re PDPs.

3.7.97 Kate Bullock visits school to evaluate the finding of the 'Project 50' with JRB.

7.7.97 The Government (DfEE) publishes its white paper on education "*Excellence in schools*".

7.7.97 Second meeting with David Hemery and the M.E.S.T in school.

17.7.97 MAB attends a meeting with PKH concerned with raising potential. The group comprises a Headteacher from Swindon Mr A Fleet, Dr David Hemery, Mr Richard Cummins from the Swindon Business and Enterprise Commission and a Senior Teacher from Hreod Parkway School about to undertake some research into raising achievement. The group is in its infancy but is anxious to improve pupil potential. I agree to produce a paper for September on what St John's has done so far. The common strand of agreement from all members of the group is that if there is to be an improvement in pupils, the first task is to raise the self-esteem and status of the teachers.

18.7.97 MAB meets DPR about his research with his two Year 9 Mathematics groups.

22.7.97 The Summer Term ends. The M.E.S.T team are feeling very positive about the new term and with the now retired members of the old SMT ceasing to have a role, it looks like some very positive and new initiatives will emerge in September.

23.7.97 MAB meets with Jen Russ and Jack Whitehead at Bath University to discuss progress.

The end of the Summer Term 1997

Story 5 September 1997 The start of the new academic year

The year starts with the new management structure in place, and the five period day is also an innovation. There had been a great deal of concern expressed at the end of the previous

term on the effect that the 5 period day would have on staff, and the consequent effect on the quality of teaching and achievement for the pupils.

3.9.97 I meet with all the staff newly appointed to the school including the NQTs, and I explain the principle now in operation is an expectation that all staff will become involved in some sort of teacher research, during their time in post. An invitation to the Action Research group is issued.

3.9.97 MAB meets with DPM to help him to formalise his school-based research on marketing and to give him some reference materials to assist him with his research.

3.9.97 MAB meets with IXB to discuss her MA course. It is to be based around an investigation into the differences in reading between boys and girls.

3.9.97 MAB meets with SK to get the school counsellor service up and running.

12.9.97 SPS tells me how she is using S.A.Ts and C.A.Ts scores in her mark book for her Yr. 10 pupils.

12.9.97 The Learning Resource team questions at their meeting the value of C.A.T testing in Year 8. Their premise is that the non-verbal reasoning component in particular will not have changed since Yr. 7 as this is measuring innate ability. The department is to discuss it further.

14.9.97 MAB attends a second Learning Support meeting to continue their discussion on C.A.T scores. MAB insisted that they continue testing, as the school is anxious to build a database of pupil performance. The directorate agreed that this was desirable but concluded that C.A.T tests may not be the most appropriate test in Year 8. They are to look into the use of other tests and report back.

22.9.97 At the SMT meeting there is a long discussion about the value of the Raising Achievement Working Party. It was recognised that it was no longer fulfilling the role and the conclusion reached was that its useful life had probably come to an end. It was suggested that the Curriculum Co-ordinators took it to their curriculum teams and discussed it with them. MAB offered to collate and publicise any information produced in

the area. It was also suggested that it become a standing item on all curriculum school agendas. This is the end of a significant research cycle for the Raising Achievement Working Party. It has done its job in getting the thrust of improvement initiatives underway and it is appropriate that it now ceases to exist in its current form.

22.9.97 The SMT meeting discussed the reporting procedure currently in place. MAB asked that target setting should have a place on future reports, and that progress made on the set targets be included by the Form tutors on the next report.

26 & 27 .9. 97 Two training days with the IT consultant for the IT trainers in school in preparation for the forthcoming SDD.

6.10.97 C.A.T. testing for the 1997/8 Yr. 7 cohort starts, run by the Learning Support Directorate.

9.10.97 MAB attends the research weekend at Bath.

3.11.97 MAB has a conversation with SMH about the C.A.T database. He informs me that Marie Wright is working on the creation of it so that it will be accessible for all staff to use.

3.11.97 MAB attends the Raising Potential working group in Swindon chaired by David Hemery. It is a group that intends to put together a bid to the DfEE for grant aid to research the unlocking of children's potential.

5.11.97 I meet with KMP to update on current state of play with C.A.Ts and self-esteem.

5.11.97 I try out a questionnaire that I have devised for the measurement of 'Soft indicators'. I use some girls in a Year 8 class and it seems to be successful.

10.11.97 MAB looks through the minutes of all curriculum school meetings since September and comments to the Curriculum Co-ordinators that there are only three references to the raising of achievement despite a statement from SMT making it a standing order on all agendas.

12.11.97 MAB meets with Jack Whitehead and Jen Russ to discuss progress with my research. We agree that a cycle of the research has just ended.

18.11.97 PKH asks me to re-start the impetus for raising achievement.

19.11.97 SMH informs me that Corrine and Marie are in the process of transferring data to the new database regarding C.A.Ts and S.A.Ts.

24.11.97 MAB issues the paper on raising achievement to all directors inviting them to meet with me to discuss progress. I discuss the paper at the SMT meeting and get agreement for it to be issued.

24.11.97 Raising Ds to Cs at GCSE has become an issue for PKH. He raises it at SMT and floats the idea of SMT taking a small number of Year11 pupils each who fall into this category and closely monitoring their work between now and the Summer examinations. He will ask the Directors for names.

26.11.97 MAB has received several returns already with dates for interviews with directors. IXB is particularly keen to talk with me, as her ideas for her dissertation will lead to an improvement in boys' reading.

1.12.97 PKH issues a paper to SMT on the Yr. 11 C/D borderline pupils and proposed actions.

1.12.97 Interview with IXB on her MA research on raising achievement in boys' reading.

8.12.97 More discussion on raising achievement at SMT. Names now allocated to SMT members.

8.12.97 IBR presents his paper to SMT on *'Able Pupils a Policy Document'*.

9.12.97 Interview with MXH on how the Geography Dept is raising achievement.

17.12.97 MAB meets with Jack and Jen at Bath.

18.12.97 MAB gets his Yr. 13 pupils to do a report on his personality and teaching style.

18.12.97 MAB reminds DPR of the training video he was going to use as staff development with his dept. He is still in favour of doing it.

18.12.97 MAB asks IXB to be a central part in the next section of his study and she is happy to participate.

19.12.97 MAB gets his Lower 6th groups to undertake the questionnaire on his teaching style and personality statements.

19.12. 97 End of the Christmas Term.

Spring Term 1998

16.1.98 MAB distributes his 'attitude to self' questionnaire to YR 11 middle ability pupils, i.e. those in the C/D boundary area.

19.1.98 MAB has an interview with JRB regarding how the concept of Raising Achievement can be included within the Life Style Directorate.

19.1.98 GGS gives a report to SMT on the 'Success Maker' training and issues a paper.

20.1.98 MAB talks to SMH about the ongoing process of getting a database for CATs, SATs and KS results. This has now been going on for a year, and it is caused by the direct opposition of the systems manager. There are now moves towards success. The systems manager has finally acceded that to have two networks in the school is inoperable. He is now dedicating (i) time and an operator to transfer school data to the main school system so that all staff can access it, and (ii) is helping SMH to construct a suitable database. The projected time for it to be an up and running operation is now after half term. The operator has however just resigned so there may be further delays.

23.1.98 MAB starts to mentor his Yr. 11 C/D boundary pupils. He has a meeting with the pupil Michelle Bird. See the report on Yr. 11 Mentoring in Chapter 7. The pupils are Amy Hossack, Michelle Bird, Stephanie Potter, and Emma Seerley.

2.2.98 MAB revisits the Maths group of middle ability pupils whom he videoed last year with ANS. He asks them to contribute to a further discussion on their progress in Maths with ANS, and 10 pupils are very happy to help. He will arrange a meeting for after half term.

2.2.98 MAB meets with pupil Stephanie Potter re the Yr. 11 mentoring.

5.2.98 A Second session with Michelle, first session with Amy and Emma.

5.2.98 SMT agrees that the whole school initiative for the next academic year will be the raising of the expectation of teaching and learning.

5.2.98 SMH and RBW continue to work on the CATs database on the main school network. It looks as though we are getting closer.

6.2.98 Interview with KJS re the Yr. 10 mentoring initiative established by her.

6.2.98 SDD takes place, looking at the behaviour policy and the Directorate Development plans for next year, which must now include Target setting and continue to embrace the concept of raising achievement.

6.2.98 MAB has a general feeling that staff are becoming more receptive to new ideas and being able to devote time to developments. There are still large numbers who say they are stressed, but there is a less negative feel in the air. When PKH spoke to the staff at the SDD staff meeting, he said *'there are more nods of agreement and a feel of less people resistant to change'*. PKH spoke to the staff about all pulling together to enforce the ethos of the school and the new behaviour policy.

11.2.98 Strategic Management Group Conference 2. Great discussion took place during the day about the need to formulate a 3-year plan, which would encompass the following strands.

- a. Continuing professional development.
- b. The raising of achievement.
- c. Raising the standard of teaching and learning.
- d. Setting targets to enhance the achievement.

These four strands are inextricably interwoven and should be considered as one aim.

12.2.98 MAB meets with the Chair of Governors and Chair of the Governor's Education Standards Committee. The outcome of the meeting is that the Governors are to set aside money each year for professional staff development that will enhance the expertise of the staff and the learning of the pupils long term.

14.2.98 Some random thoughts by me

- The staff seem to be more receptive and willing to listen to ideas.
- The thrust of the school seems more purposeful.
- The team of senior managers is working extremely well together and the Headteacher has just confirmed permanency on their positions so that any remaining doubts about the future have been dispelled. As a consequence, real and purposeful management will I am sure now take place.
- The governing body is very interested in being involved in new initiatives in the school and wishes to allocate a specific governor to each of the curriculum schools to show even greater interest and knowledge of developments.
- As the PDM I am now getting more requests for individual development courses without them being initiated by me.

The staff too has ideas that they contribute in meetings at all levels and these are disseminated by minutes and then acted upon by the staff involved in those initiative areas.

It's now half term and the staff generally feel that they are tired and need a break. I am looking forward to the next half term and the expectation of being able to develop the career paths for more colleagues. I now feel that they are beginning to trust and value my judgements and I am measuring this by the number of staff who drop into my office for a chat which then develops into a longer career conversation.

Story 6

The return after the spring half term starts, as I had hoped a week ago, colleagues are starting to ask for appointments to speak with me.

24.2.98 I meet with Jack Whitehead at the University to discuss the progress of my research.

25.2.98 I held another interview with Alan Shelton to continue to develop the work with him. I am now at a stage where I need to know what his feelings are one year on from our initial conversations.

4.3.98 I held a second interview with IXB to help further her M.A research into 'boys' reading'. The help that she needs is to focus down on the research question. Having recently been through the same process, I feel in an excellent position to do this.

4.3.98 I met with Jen Russ when she came into school. We talked about my research and in particular the papers I had submitted to her and Jack Whitehead immediately after Christmas.

4.3.98 I meet with Annie Martin to continue our discussions about Alan Shelton. It is now a year since I spoke to her and another student and I am interested in how and if her feelings have altered during that time. She agrees that we can tape the interview. Unfortunately the other student involved, Shane Morton was ill and could not add her contribution

4.3.98 At the Governors' meeting this evening, my temporary position as Deputy Headteacher is made permanent. This has enormous implications for my confidence and for the plans I can now make for the future development of my plans and myself for my role in the school. I am more than delighted.

8.3.98 I asked one of the media studies students to make a video record of me in action as a teacher to help validate my claims for my teaching style and personality. He is very happy to help.

Easter holidays

22.4.98 At the SMT meeting, the Headteacher confirms the need to implement plans to introduce Target Setting. The process is required to be in place by September 1998 and the Government in their circular '*Excellence in Schools*' has made the process and their requirements clear.

23.4.98 I meet with ES the Office Services Manager to encourage her to continue her Open University Course. I explain to her as she is new to the post that the school is dedicated in

its philosophy to the concept of life long learning and that I was happy to assist her if she would like me to.

24.4.98 At the full staff meeting, the issue of Target Setting is now put into the public domain of the whole staff, and the intentions and time scale for implementation made clear.

24.4.98 ES and the Director for Learning Management meet to further the creation and development of the database required for the recording of base line measurements like CATs, SATs and the self-esteem scores. This development has now been going on for over 2 years and the staff feel a little jaundiced at the lack of progress. I hope that with the appointment of ES there is both the will and the expertise to take this development forwards at speed.

25.4.98 I meet with GGS to plan a training package to help Directors to both understand and be able to undertake realistic target setting for their Directorates.

25.4.98 I arrange with David Smailes to take the planned video of me teaching during my 'A' level Biology lesson.

29.4.98 I have another meeting with Imogen Brown about her study.

30.4.98 I attend the Wiltshire Secondary Headteachers' Conference representing the Headteacher. The particular focus was that of Target Setting. I need to bring current information into the school and into my development process.

1.5.98 I have a final meeting with Michelle Bird one of my Year 11 Mentoring Scheme students. I gather her opinions and views about the process.

2.5.98 Sharon Bertie a Trainee Teacher gives to me a copy of her Educational Study. I have asked her to do this because it has involved some work in evaluating the Literacy project initiative started earlier in the year. The data from this will be helpful to the school. I also helped Sharon in developing the study and gave guidance during the data capture process.

6.5.98 I had an interview with SSJ. She is also involved in an M.A with the Open University and needs some guidance on the area of school management for her dissertation.

6.5.98 I have the final interview with Amy Hossack. She is one of my Year 11 Mentoring Scheme students. I gather her opinions and views about the process.

11.5.98 I meet with ten Year 11 students to tape their feelings about the Year 11 Mentoring Project. Their feelings both positive and negative are important if the school is to undertake the process again next year.

14.5.98 I hold a discussion with the Bursar who is undertaking an M.B.A with Lincoln University. He needs some data on computers, and I advise him to meet with another colleague on the staff who researched this area for his M.Ed.

1.6.98 I have another meeting with SSJ. She has now refined her research topic and needs more assistance before she can implement her data capture.

2.6.98 I meet with SNT (Director of KS4) to discuss the success or otherwise of the Year 11 Mentoring Project.

2.6.98 I meet with Jack Whitehead and Jen Russ at the University to discuss progress with my research.

3.6.98 I have the final interview with Emma Seerley and Jodie Kale. They were part of the Year 11 Mentoring Project for students. I gather their opinions and views about the process.

9.6.98 I attend a meeting with Jack Whitehead and the Headteacher. The school wishes to have some external validation of its activities in terms of School Improvement. It is agreed that the school will become overtly involved in an Action Research project that will give this validation.

10.6.98 I give more advice to IXB on her research.

10.6.98 The Governors' Personal Professional Qualifications sub-committee meets. This is a newly formed committee that met for the first time today. It is at this meeting that decisions for the financial support given to colleagues to continue their further professional qualifications are made. At the end of the meeting, criteria for the award of financial support was agreed and funding to the sum of £7,500.00 agreed.

23.6.98 The Governors' Educational Standards Committee meets to discuss the Governors' role in the target setting process.

24.6.98 I meet with EXB. He wants some help with his NPQH course. We discuss some of his ideas.

24.6.98 GGS outlines the Target Setting plans to the Strategic Management Group. These are the Directors of the various departments and faculties. It is a practical 'hands on' session where they are required to do some analysis using previous data for their areas.

25.6.98 The SMT holds its third development conference of the year. The aim of this conference is to complete the details in preparation for the new academic year in September.

6.7.98 Letters are sent to all staff who are receiving financial support for their Professional Qualifications to invite them to attend the next Action Research Group meeting. Membership of this group is a written caveat of the financial assistance package.

7.7.98 Action Research Group meets with the guest speaker Jack Whitehead from Bath University. Jack outlines the current thinking in the field of Action Research, and gives his view on how the current work of the school in raising achievement is located within this movement.

7.7.98 I meet with Jack Whitehead for a tutorial on my own personal research project.

8.7.98 I met with TYN to support him at the start of his MA Course. I explained how the Action Research Group will be able to help and support him. He was not able to attend the previous night's meeting.

8.7.98 IXB gives her permission for an interview I had with her, to be used by the Action Research Group at Bath University as part of their development work.

9.7.98 I spend one hour with EXB helping him to prepare for an interview the following day. This is a definite role for me as a Professional Development Manager. We specifically discuss the process of raising achievement, as he will be required to speak about this at his interview.

13.7.98 EXB is appointed to his Deputy Headship. He calls in to thank me for the part I played, and reinforces the opportunity for him to keep in contact when he moves at the end of the Autumn Term 1998. He is anxious that he can continue to use me as a resource in terms of professional development advice.

22.7.98 The term and academic year ends

During the summer holidays, IXB sends me a copy of her assignment on boys' and girls' learning, for me to critique. This I am happy to do and I make several suggestions regarding the assignment and speak at length to her on the telephone.

The New Term September 1998

1.9.98 The first SMT meeting of the new academic year. The examination results for the 1998 cohort at both GCSE and 'A' level are discussed. They are exceptional and the reasons for that success will be the feature of many discussions during the early part of the term. The results themselves are displayed in **Appendix 9**.

2.9.98 The Autumn Term 1998 starts for all teaching staff with a Staff Development Day organised by myself. At that meeting, the Headteacher reaffirms the school mission statement and the professional thrust for the academic year. That is, the process of raising standards in teaching and learning. He also congratulated the staff on the outstanding achievements of the examinations in 1998. The highlight has to be the two students in Year 13 who achieved six 'A' level subjects at Grade A. A first in the history of the school. The staff seem to be back from the holidays with a purposeful buzz about them. The computer software has let the preparation processes down however and there are no timetables available for pupils or solid information about rooms to teach in. This is going

to add to the usual start of term pressure, but at the moment the staff seem to be taking it in good heart. Apart from this IT hitch, the term starts with order and purpose.

3.9.98 At the full staff meeting held today, I talk to all teaching and non-teaching staff about professional development opportunities, Professional Development Reviews (a changed form of appraisal). I talk to all the non-teaching staff separately about the process of raising of achievement, and the role that they play in that process.

8.9.98 I talk to all of the Newly Qualified Teachers about the specifics of their professional development using the Career Entry profiles.

8.9.98 I start the process of collecting data from the outcome of the Year 11 mentoring process. Several staff are interested in the outcome of this project. I confirm with the Headteacher that I will produce a paper to highlight the process, evaluate the results and take the recommendations forward to start thinking about the next cohort. In essence this is the end of one Action Research cycle and the start of the next.

16.9.98 I talk to EXB about his next Ed.D assignment.

17.9.98 I talk to TYN about his M.A course. I encourage him, and he is certainly enthusiastic about the work he has already completed.

17.9.98 I produce the paper on the Year 11 mentoring initiative and give it to the Headteacher. It is critical of both him and the system, but he accepts this and looks positively forwards to improving the process next time.

18.9.98 I give the same paper to the Director for Learning Needs for his comments and observations, as it is his Directorate that will be most heavily involved in supporting the initiative during the year.

19.9.98 The Headteacher asks me to present the paper to the SMT.

19.9.98 I have a conversation with the Librarian who asks me to organise some staff development for her team on teaching skills for non-teachers. I also have staff development conversations with the Director for ICT, with the Administrative Office Manager, the

Headteacher regarding Industrial placements and the Director for Vocational Education about 'Key Skills' training for all staff.

19.9.98 I give some help to IBR in narrowing down a research area and question for his M.Ed.

21.9.98 This heralds a new start to a cycle in my own professional development. A researcher from Bath University Mrs Susan Gibbs has arranged to observe me teach and reflect on my teaching style and methodology. This is in connection with her own Doctoral thesis, but I see it as an opportunity for the validation of some of my earlier personal statements about myself. The outcome should provide triangulation for my subjective value judgements. She observes me teach a Year 13 Biology class and spends 2 hours with me analysing the outcome of that lesson and my responses to events that occurred. This learning focus will be of great value to me.

23.9.98 The Director for Learning Needs, submits a paper to supplement my paper on mentoring.

24.9.98 Susan Gibbs now becomes a regular observer of all my lessons, and my interactions outside the classroom are also recorded. She proposes to continue these observations throughout the term until she feels she has collected sufficient data.

24.9.98 I meet with the three Assistant Headteachers on an individual basis to talk about their professional development. All of them are receptive to the need and idea of further professional qualifications and I leave them to consider the options open to them.

24.9.98 The minutes of the Pastoral Team meeting indicates that there is unease about the re-timed school day and the pressure it is placing on people. This is exactly the same concern as last year at this time. The intention was to alleviate the concerns, but despite the hard work of the person constructing the timetable, the ideas put forward were not possible and so the pressure remains.

25.9.98 I meet with the Headteacher to discuss his professional development. Again he was receptive and positive about the idea, and realised that as the leader of the school he has an obligation to lead from the front. I feel it will give considerable weight to any future staff

development conversations if he is also taking part in the process. I am pleased with the result of this meeting.

29.9.98 I speak again with the Office Services Manager and encourage her to speak to her staff about the possibility of NVQ qualifications for Administration. She is receptive to this and I send for the details from the administering body.

29.9.98 I issue an invitation to all support staff to attend my librarian development session on 'Teaching for Non-Teachers'. I am amazed at the positive response I get for this session and I now have to repeat it on another day to meet the demand.

30.9.98 I meet Jack Whitehead and Jen Russ at Bath University for a tutorial session on my research. Jen asks me to present some of my work on 'Teacher Artistry' to the department's Professional Development Group in November. This is another learning step for me.

1.10.98 The Headteacher receives an invitation for him and myself to address a conference of teachers in Swindon on 'Teaching and Learning'. Here is another learning and development opportunity for me.

9.10.98 I have a Professional Development interview with TEP. I try to act as a sounding board for his thoughts on his own professional development. At the end of the interview, I feel that I have again woken his desire for further academic qualification. He has just become a father, but now that the baby is born TEP feels able to devote more of his attention to his career development again.

14.10.98 During a professional development conversation with MJC, I find myself in a position where I am justifying to my colleague why I am undertaking a Ph.D. It is framed in the context of his own professional development and why he should undertake more qualifications, but he asks me the question. This is an emotional and emotive issue for me. For the first time with a colleague I express the real force that is driving me to complete this project. It is to do with my personal self-doubt about my intellectual abilities, and my need to publicly prove that I am capable of performing at the highest possible intellectual level. What is reassuring and significant are his words in reply. *'Mike you don't have to prove anything to anybody, you are perfectly accepted as the professional you are and*

well respected in the school'. In terms of my own self-esteem this is a momentous moment for me, and one that has secured me in the task of continuing with the research. I have received validation from a colleague, which I hope will now put to rest the nagging spectre of self-doubt that has dogged my educational development since childhood. A major personal breakthrough - Hurrah!

14.10.98 I give a presentation to all of the support staff in the school at their request as part of my scheme to make all staff part of the team. The subject is 'Teaching for Non-Teachers'.

15.10.98 TEP returns to confirm with me the area he is hoping to study for his M.A.

16.10.98 I repeat the session for non-teachers such is the interest amongst my non-teaching colleagues.

17.10.98 I have another conversation with MJC further clarifying his thoughts on professional development.

21.10.98 A new development for me as I give a major presentation to the conference of Headteachers as planned on 1.10.98. I am pleased with how the session is received, the compliments that are given, the interest that is shown about the school and its raising achievement initiatives and the teaching and learning processes.

22.10.98 I arrange for MJC to meet with a lecturer at Bath University to take his development forwards.

Half Term Autumn 1998

2.11.98 The issue of redundancy rears its head again. The staff is to be given some of the information at the next staff meeting when the Headteacher will raise options for enhanced early retirement. (This is all highly confidential at this time, and no one outside the SMT is remotely aware of the financial crisis in the school.)

4.11.98 The school presents an evening for parents, on study skills for Year 11 parents, as part of the raising achievement initiative, 120 parents attend.

5.11.98 I continue to meet with MJC on his development. He is using me in my role to crystallise his ideas and explore all the options open to him. He is reluctant to make decisions until we have discussed all the possible avenues. I am delighted that he is using me in this way.

12.11.98 I attend a tutorial with Jack Whitehead after a meeting at school. Jack comes to my office, and listens as I hold a conversation with the researcher from Bath University who is monitoring my teaching activities. Jack reinforces how valuable this process is to my own research.

13.11.98 The school has a Staff Development Day totally focussed on the processes of Target Setting, and the process of achieving the targets set. This is a crucial part of the raising achievement process, and is directed by each teacher specifically at each child in his or her group as this will have a cumulative effect on the overall effectiveness of the school in achieving the targets set for the next academic year.

18.11.98 I give the presentation to the Professional Development Group at the University of Bath on 'Teacher Artistry'.

25.11.98 I speak to all of the Directors and the Curriculum Co-ordinators about the process of Professional Development Reviews that I have just revamped following my trial studies. I am anxious to get the process underway so that as many teaching and non teaching colleagues as possible can have the opportunity to identify their training needs and start work on the acquisition of new skills. This will enhance the work of the school in improvement processes.

25.11.98 I suggest to AJP that he consider the NPQH qualification as part of his continuing professional development.

15.12.98 The concept of Year 11 Mentoring for students on the C/D borderline is raised again at the SMT meeting. In view of the criticisms I raised of the management of the process last year, which is discussed in Chapter 7, the team agrees to manage the process differently this time round. The end of a cycle, with a definite start to the next, after re-planning has taken place.

Appendix 9

Successes and failures

Since the start of the research in 1995, the school has become almost transformed. Some of the initiatives have been successful and some failed, but they have all played a part in the Action Research cycle of the school. It has changed its culture from an insular, parochial outlook to a much more dynamic institution. While there is still a healthy criticism of new innovation and change, there is also an air of willingness to try. In February 2001 there was a whole staff development session based on an investigation into the development of a new curriculum suitable for the pupils in the C21st. Early feedback via evaluation sheets shows much innovative work at subject level and indicates a general openness of mind to the concept.

To support this culture change, I intend to look at initiatives in the school for which there is quantifiable evidence. As already noted, many of the initiatives are long term, but some have come to fruition and can be analysed to see what effect if any, the intervention strategies had on the raising of achievement. The efforts that St John's is making to improve effectiveness are wide and numerous and is supported by Cuban (1984) who argues for not narrowing the breadth of school effectiveness measuring criteria, to just those of improving test results. The school fully supports the concept of a broad and balanced school experience and there were additional activities and initiatives taking place, to ensure the broader education of the child and the overall improvement of the processes in the school. These initiatives are however beyond the scope of this thesis. Whilst examination results, the hard indicators are important, other criteria of effectiveness will also play a part in any whole school evaluative process. If the list of strategies and initiatives listed in Chapter 4 is considered, of the fifty that took place over the research period, there are a number of different groups to highlight to the reader. The first group are those initiatives that 'withered on the vine'; inevitably, as Slavin (1989) suggested, there was an element of '*faddism*' about the way the school approached the raising of achievement process. Consequently for all the reasons identified at various places in the thesis narrative, they proved to be non-sustainable or non-productive and ground to a halt; for example the project 50, the Drama Department initiative, setting reviews and the Swindon unlocking pupil potential group. Other initiatives were started and were time limited; consequently they came to their natural end and stopped e.g. the Bath University T.V.E.I projects, the numeracy working party, the work on school ethos, and the Yr. 9

Behaviour Blitz. These were not wasted initiatives because their outcomes provided information and data, which contributed to longer-term improvements, and the management of changes in the way the school approached the raising of achievement.

Some quantitative results providing the evidence of success

Initiative 48 Yr. 11 Mentoring Project results and analysis 1998

In August 1998, the results for the G.C.S.E examinations for the 1997/8 cohort became available. This was the group who had the D/C borderline pupils identified and targeted for extra attention from the subject teachers and were supervised by the Senior Management Team. The methodology and results of this initiative can be seen as **Appendix 2** together with a commentary on the weaknesses of its management.

The current situation confirms both the success and the validity of the project. The Mentoring process is now fully embedded into the cycle of the school year. EIB has been appointed to be responsible for the year-to-year management of the process and from the thesis point of view; several research cycles have taken place. The initial year cycle ended with the evaluation and report, Boshier (1998) **Appendix 2**. This was followed by alterations to the system and it ran again during 1998/9 academic year. Analysis of the results at the end of that academic year brought about more amendments and refinements to the process. More staff were now involved, less pupils were allocated to each member of staff, time was made available during tutorial periods and identification of the target groups was made earlier. The culture of the school now accepts this as an important part of the monitoring and evaluation process, and as more staff become more practised at the art of mentoring, even more positive comments are being received from pupils and parents. This is very definitely an Action Research cycle in operation, and I continue to give my observations on the process, encourage staff to be involved and take an active part as a mentor in my role as an educator. In February 2001 the next cycle of this initiative has started and with the increase in both number and expertise of mentors, there is now a ratio of one mentor to one student. My student this year is Michael, and after two sessions, he said:

I am really pleased I am taking part in this scheme, I am not very good at organisation, and you are forcing me to do things I would otherwise have left to the last moment. I feel much more comfortable now.

External examination results

Examination results remain the most valid form of measurement of internal success or failure.

Table 4 - Advance Level Examinations 1991 – 2000

A Level Points score Grade A = 10 points, B = 8, C = 6, D = 4, E = 2.

Year	No of Boys	No of Girls	Average Points Scores		Total
			Boys	Girls	
1991	35	37	13.7	15.9	14.8
1992	56	60	21.2	18.7	19.8
1993	43	50	21.4	19.8	20.6
1994	53	54	17.0	17.0	17.0
1995	43	51	19.5	17.7	18.6
1996	47	59	17.6	18.9	18.4
1997	51	50	18.0	18.6	18.3
1998	52	56	21.6	21.6	21.6
1999	50	57	16.5	17.9	17.1
2000	58	60	21.2	20.8	21.0

Table 5 - GCSE Grades 1991-2000

Year	5+ A-C	5+ A-G	Entered 1 or more	Achieve1+ A-C	Achieve1+ A-G
1991	43.8	88.6	97.5	74.1	97.5
1992	45.7	88.9	97.5	73.9	97.0
1993	50.6	93.3	98.3	NA	98.3
1994	53.4	93.6	96.6	NA	95.6
1995	54.0	93.8	97.3	NA	94.6
1996	58.0	97.0	99.0	NA	99.0
1997	54.0	95.0	96.0	NA	96.0
1998	59.7	96.3	98.1	NA	97.7
1999	56.7	94.3	97.0	NA	97.8

2000	60.7	92.1	96.0	NA	95.8
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NA = Not available

An interpretation of these results is complex as there are a great number of factors involved behind the raw statistics. It has to be recognised that figures are not the whole story.

As a school we have an open examination policy, that is to say, no pupil is debarred from taking examinations or indeed selected for them. However there have been occasions over the years when pupils have failed to complete the practical or course work element of a particular subject. In that case they have not been entered. In addition a small percentage of pupils on roll leave before the examinations take place, are permanently excluded and although offered the opportunity do not attend for the examinations, and finally there are a few pupils each year who fail to attend even though they are entered. This is accounted for in the table below.

Table 6 - Pupils not achieving any GCSE examination grades. Noted as a percentage of the examination cohort

Year	Cohort size	No passes A –G at GCSE%	Not entered
1991	201	2.5%	4
1992	199	2.5%	3
1993	178	1.7%	3
1994	204	4.4%	7
1995	224	2.3%	7
1996	220	4.0%	9
1997	216	0.5%	4
1998	216	0.5%	4
1999	210	2.4%	5
2000	190	1.3%	8

Included here are only the basic results, the school offers a full range of GNVQs, A/S levels, Pitman Examinations, and a series of keyboarding and other certificates for the less intellectual.

An analysis shows that there is a general increase in performance at GCSE level, with more pupils achieving GCSE grades at A – C in the last five years than ever before. In

particular 1999 was a record year, with 60.7% of candidates achieving five or more GCSEs at grade A* to C and 65% of all candidates achieving grades A* to C. This is not reflected in table 5 as there was a significant group of Yr 10 pupils who took GCSE a year early and achieved high marks during that year. Statistically, these younger pupils are not included in the Government figures for the year, and would be counted into the next academic year. Nevertheless they did achieve the result and are included in the school's internal calculations thus giving the achieved figure of 60.7%. In 1998 there were 146 A* s and 13 candidates achieved 9 or more subjects at A* or A. In 1999 this figure fell slightly to 104 A*s although the overall percentage of A*s to C increased to the school's best performance ever. It might be simplistic to suggest that this was directly attributable to the raising achievement initiatives taking place in the school, but certainly, since the emphasis started in 1996, the results have been better. At 'A' level the figure had remained reasonably static until 1998 with an approximate average points score per pupil of 18.0 points. This puts the school on a par with many independent schools and nationally in the top 200 schools. The 1998 results however were outstanding with the average points score of 21.6 per candidate. The hidden statistics also improved for 1998, with 95.3% of candidates achieving an overall pass grade of A – E, and 45.3% of those candidates achieving grades A or B giving an improvement in performance overall of 0.3% per candidate on any previous year; a record the school is proud of and is determined to maintain. The test was in the 1999 GCSE results. This is the group that had the C.A.T scores data for them when they were in Year 7, and repeated them again in Year 9. The predictions from these scores lead the school to understand that it is a very weak year. The actual results can be seen as **Appendix 13**. They were both a surprise and a relief to the school. The disastrous prediction of 45.3% Grade A to C in reality turned into a creditable 56.7%. While this was not as good as previous years, it was certainly better than the school could have hoped for. The year has been the target of a number of the initiatives discussed in this thesis, and the real test of success of the improvement process will be to see if this group perform better than predicted years ago. It will be much more conclusive as an argument to attribute any success to the plethora of school initiatives undertaken. May I remind the reader that Hopkins *et al's* (1994:44) definition of school effectiveness is:

The differences in student outcomes on a variety of measures, not simply standardised tests of basic skills that the schools achieve after full account has been taken of the pupil's prior learning history and family background at the time he or she enters school.

The difference in performance at examination level, at macro school level, and at Directorate level over time is natural and to be expected. Different cohorts of pupils perform differently, some being much more academically able than others. Current research shows that schools are differentially effective in different areas as found by Reynolds (1992) and Mortimore *et al* (1988), and the research shows that schools which are judged to be effective continue to be so. Nuttall (1989) does not wholly agree and adds the caveat that before such a statement can be considered true, the school must not be judged on a single year, or a single outcome measure. Equally, there is the question of 'are schools equally effective for all pupils?' Again current research generally points to the fact that there are differences in performance between pupils and between schools in the way that effectiveness impacts upon them. If we assume from the results that St John's is demonstrating some degree of effectiveness, we must not assume that it is the case across all pupils. We must recognise this and put strategies into place to accommodate those differences. Nuttall (1989), Gray *et al* (1990) and Reynolds (1992) disagree with each other on this point and further research similar to that at St John's will add data to help clarify the issue. Let us celebrate the success of 1998 with appropriate caution. Let us also recognise that the improvement in these results is an outcome of teacher learning. There is an increasing improvement in teacher co-operation, dialogue and support in the field of teacher activity in the school. I would hope that this increased involvement and co-operation will lead to a positive effect on pupil performance. The hard indicators displayed here are the final judge.

Another piece of hard evidence supporting school improvement is indirectly connected to the publishing of the school's examination results and that is the increase in applications for entry to the school for 'out of catchment area' pupils. We have, as a school, enjoyed over subscription for many years, but the 1999/2000 academic year is vastly increased. With no significant building increase in the area, and no major disasters in neighbouring educational establishments, our application number for this next academic year currently stands at 80+ pupils. It is so significant that the Headteacher has had to make special application to the Governing body to increase the intake number and produce a plan for changing the admissions policy for the school. An improving academic performance in the eyes of the public and the community may be stimulating this increase. The academic year 2000/01 continues on the same trend, with 90 'out of catchment area' applications.

Initiative 11. The Technical and Vocational Educational Initiative (T.V.E.I) Projects

These were initiatives developed in partnership with Bath University and involved both the Directorates for Mathematics and Technology. Hard evidence for the success of the T.V.E.I embedded initiative in Mathematics is available. As indicated in Chapter 4, the scheme started in the academic year 1996/7 and the results from the academic years 1996/7 and 1997/8 Mathematics groups are available to measure success by. Since the inception of the new scheme, the most profound comment on success has to be that, no pupil has achieved less than a grade E at GCSE level. This is quite remarkable, as previously, the lower ability pupils were not entered for GCSE because it was considered too hard for them. Now not only are they undertaking the course, but achieving substantially better examination marks than could have been hoped for. On analysis with the Director of Mathematics, it is evident as noted in Chapter 4, that the total involvement of the Mathematics staff in the creation of the scheme and the way it is planned and resourced with appropriate work and material, has contributed to its success. The Director is delighted, and this improvement has raised the self-esteem of many of the weakest pupils in the school. The scheme has had the effect of a reduction in the referral rate to senior management for poor and disaffected behaviour.

The T.V.E.I project in Technology is more difficult to assess. This scheme was directed at KS3 pupils and the initiative involved the development of both a new teaching package and assessment process. The report from the Director of Technology is less ebullient than Mathematics. It seems to have been partially successful in as much as the package is in place and being used by the Technology staff. What may be hampering the real success of the initiative is the lack of financial resource to the Directorate to produce all the materials it requires. The Director says '*it is developing and standards are rising at KS3 but other changes in teaching personnel have also taken place during this trial period so I can not make a claim that it is just this initiative that has brought about a rise in standards*'. More evaluation and investigation will help to consolidate views on the success and the value of the initiative.

Appendix 10

Mathematics Sets at St John's

During my research, I have been making the statement supported by pupils and colleagues at the school that Alan Shelton is not only a good teacher by professional standards set by the school, but has also got a special 'just him' factor discussed earlier. While clearly many teachers possess many of the factors, Alan does seem to have something extra and special that neither the pupils nor I can articulate effectively.

In addition, it seems important that if I am to suggest as I do, that Alan's examination results are a direct result of his good teaching then I need to examine those results together with the performances of other colleagues in the Mathematics department.

Before that, let me explain how groups are formed in Mathematics in the school. On entry to the school in Year 7, pupils are put into Tutor Groups by the Head of Year, based on information from the 13 primary schools that feed St John's. A balance of the 8 mixed ability groups make up the entry to Year 7. During Year 8, in mathematics lessons the groups are given a series of half term tests and the results of these are added to the results of the annual summer exam taken in July.

The department then considers these results and the pupils are set in Year 9 accordingly. On the basis of weekly monitoring and half-term tests there is a small movement of pupils up and down the sets during the year. The annual summer exam also contributes to the formation of the Year 10 sets. These only alter marginally from the Year 9 groups and only as a result of particularly high or low performances in the assessment tests.

Again, movement in Year 10 is dependent on performance, and any movement that does take place happens at the end of the Christmas Term and probably amounts to no more than four pupils. In Years 10 and 11, the year group is split into two halves, with sets of similar ability in each half, so it is possible to compare the performance of one set of a particular ability with another in the other half of the year of similar ability. One half is referred to as Red Band, and the other as Blue Band, and denoted in the tables as R or B. The remaining sets in that band are then noted underneath it. During Year 11, the groups remain fixed and the pupils are entered for the appropriate GCSE level of examination for their ability at the end of Year 11. It is within the context of this framework that the

examination results below are based. Once the group levels are set, the teacher tends to have the group through Years 10 and 11. Staff tend to be rotated by the Head of Department so that the member of staff best suited to a particular group are given to them, and staff also have a spread of strong and weaker ability groups. There are some members of the department who would prefer only to teach in the lower school and so do not have examination groups, and there are some staff who are more suited to the older pupils and tend not to be allocated to the lower school groups.

Alan Shelton's teaching style tends to suit the older pupils, and that together with his other post of responsibility as Head of Year for Years 12 and 13 means that he does not often teach in the lower building. As a consequence, the first time that most pupils come across him is at the start of Year 10. (Remember here the comments during the pupil's interviews and Alan's own comments about his reputation preceding him.)

In an attempt to compare the examination performance of Alan against other colleagues and to get an overview of the performance of the department in general, listed below are the GCSE results for three years set by set. Set 1 being the most able set and set 5 being composed of children who have specific learning difficulties.

Table 7 Mathematics Department GCSE Results 1994

In the tables, Alan Shelton is referred to as AS

Set	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
1R GS	3	7	16	4	-	-	-	-	-
2 CD	-	-	3	15	5	1	-	-	-
3 MP	-	-	-	1	4	9	7	-	-
4 JG							7	5	3
1B JG	1	4	16	8	-	-	-	-	-
2 AS	-	-	17	10	2	-	-	-	-
3 KM	-	-	-	2	14	4	1	-	-
4 GH	-	-	-	-	4	6	4	-	-
5 JA	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	2	5

Table 8 Mathematics Department GCSE Results 1995

In the tables, Alan Shelton is referred to as AS

Set	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
1R GS	2	17	11	1	-	-	-	-	-
2 SS	-	-	5	21	2	-	-	-	-
3 JP	-	-	-	7	10	7	1	-	-
4 MT				1	3	10	2	1	
1B JM	2	11	13	6	-	-	-	-	-

2 CD	-	-	11	15	3	1	-	-	-
3 AS	-	-	3	8	9	3	-	-	-
4 JG	-	-	-	-	1	6	7	1	3
5 JA	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	4	3

Table 9 Mathematics Department GCSE Results 1996

In the tables, Alan Shelton is referred to as AS

Set	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
1R MP	3	8	19	-	-	-	-	-	-
2 AS	-	-	21	5	1	-	-	-	-
3 JP	-	-	13	9	1	-	-	-	-
4 CB	-	-	-	2	10	7	2	-	-
5 SH	-	-	-	-	2	2	3	3	-
1B CD	3	11	13	-	-	-	-	-	-
2 CD	-	-	4	20	2	-	-	-	-
3 CB	-	-	-	9	7	3	-	-	-
4 SS	-	-	-	1	9	7	-	-	-
5 JA	-	-	-	-	-	5	3	-	1

Analysis of the tables

It is not my intention to make invidious comparisons between colleagues, nor to criticise in any way any of the work done by a very professional and committed department. However, if the performance of Alan Shelton's examination groups for the three years is examined, the following facts emerge.

In the 1994 results, ANS took a set 2 group. His group's performance of 17 Bs, 10 Cs and 2 Ds can be compared with the equivalent group in the other half of the year who achieved 3 Bs, 15 Cs, 5 Ds and 1 E. His group achieved a better performance. In the 1995 results ANS had a set 3 group. His group achieved 3 Bs, 8 Cs, 9 Ds and 3 Es. The comparable set in the other half of the year achieved 0 Bs, 7 Cs, 10 Ds 7 Es and 1 F. Again a better set of results. In the 1996 results, ANS took a set 2 group and achieved 21 Bs, 5 Cs, and 1D compared with the other half of the year who achieved 4 Bs, 20 Cs and 2 Ds.

From the straight examination of these results over the last three years, Alan Shelton's groups have performed substantially better than the similar group in the other half of the year at whatever level of ability group he was taking. I don't think it is unreasonable to suggest therefore that he has an edge over other colleagues in helping his pupils to achieve well at the GCSE exams. Remember that he like all other members of the department pick

up these pupils from the lower school at the start of Year 10. The groups are not selected on an individual basis for specific teachers, but on their proven abilities as demonstrated in the department's assessment processes lower down the school.

Appendix 11

The teacher and teaching in the new millennium 'the challenge'

Hargreaves and Fullan (1999:5) paint the picture for us as they talk of the 'Fourth Professional Age':

As we enter the turn of the century, the world in which we live is undergoing profound social, economic, political and cultural transformations. The social geography of postmodernity is one where boundaries between institutions are dissolving, where roles are becoming less segregated where borders are becoming increasingly irrelevant. 'What's out there' is now 'in here' and this has fundamental implications for the roles of teachers and administrators.

The teaching profession is changing. A new breed of teacher and a new age of teaching is dawning. While the craft of the classroom remains, and the autonomy of the classroom continues to be of paramount importance to all teachers, there is an increasing desire to share information about teaching and to collectively help in the improvement of children's learning. This drive comes from the teachers themselves as they struggle to adapt to the changing demands from their pupils and from the Government who are adopting an assertive role in the process of raising achievement and standards in schools and across the complete age range of school children. Pressure is also coming from parents and other members of the society into which these pupils will emerge. The demands of 'lifelong learning' are only just becoming apparent to teachers, with all of the implications that process will bring, for teachers and pupils. Who are the teachers, and who are the pupils? This is not a silly question seen within the framework of lifelong learning because everyone could possibly be both at some time in their lives. Senge (1990) has a view of lifelong learning:

People with a high level of personal mastery live in a continual learning mode....personal mastery is not something you possess. It is a process. it is a life long discipline. People with a high level of personal mastery are acutely aware of their ignorance, their incompetence, their growth areas. And they are deeply self-confident. Paradoxical? Only for those who do not see that 'the journey is the reward'.

Thus, the need for the teachers to change in attitude, approach and inner thought processes is becoming a necessity. Teaching in the C21st is calling for very different skills to those of the previous 150 years. The 'new age teacher' has to be equipped to teach the 'new age pupils' and this means more than the teacher learning how to manage and manipulate the computer. What then is happening to the teacher and the process of teaching and learning?

Clients - The pupils

The pupils have changed over time. No longer are all pupils prepared to sit and listen, take down the notes given by the teacher using a didactic style from the front of the class. There is a perfectly justifiable requirement from the pupils to be involved in and be part of their educational process. The concept of equal opportunity was thus defined in the Open University (1986: 11):

Until the mid 1960s equality of opportunity was usually taken to mean equality of opportunity between people (usually males) of different classes. In the nineteenth century, reforms in the Civil Service and army recruitment (particularly the introduction of general selection by examinations) were designed to allow bright upper-middle class young men to compete on equal terms with aristocratic young men whose family connections gave them an advantage.

The arguments for equality of opportunity in access to choice of subject and in educational provision has raged for many years. Research by Evetts (1970), Silver (1973) and Kelsall (1955) have all explored the educational justification for such provision. All pupils whatever their social origins have a right to the same educational aspirations. All pupils as proposed by Halsey (1972: 8) should have this equality of opportunity:

The goal should not be the liberal one of equality of access but equality of outcome for the median member of each identifiable non educationally defined group, i.e. the average woman or Negro or proletarian or rural dweller should have the same level of educational attainment as the average male white, white collar suburbanite. If not there has been an injustice.

In most areas of the country the 11+ examination disappeared, and was replaced by the concept of the Comprehensive School with its opportunities for all. The C.S.E and later the G.C.S.E examination replaced the old 'O' level G.C.E. examination giving pupils an opportunity to learn and be tested in a different way. A way that allowed for the recognition of a greater range of academic attainment and incorporated the problems experienced by those pupils with Specific Learning Difficulties within its framework. In the last decade, the National Curriculum, G.N.V.Q courses, modular courses, Key Skills, Core Skills, Information and Communication Technology and Active Learning have all emerged as the framework within which the educational process now operates.

The pupils are now demanding that the teachers are 'facilitators' and 'Learning Managers,' and that the experience in the classroom is an active process of discovery. The teacher setting the challenge, the pupils rising to that challenge by researching the problem often

using the sophisticated tools of current technology in producing the solution to the challenge.

This is a voyage of discovery for the pupils as well as the teachers. The fetters of the conventional rigid classroom are slowly being discarded and the lessons often require a change from the pupils sitting in a formal classroom organisation to the more informal but comfortable seating arrangements where access to in class resources are available to all as and when required.

The adage of:

***What I hear I forget
What I see I remember
What I do I understand***

has never been more appropriate than today. Active 'hands on' learning has proved to be the best producer of lifelong learning. The view expressed by the pupils in the middle ability range in particular confirms the importance of learning by doing. In the academic year 2000/01 the school is beginning work on the concept of multiple intelligences and the data found in part two informs this latest initiative.

The teacher

If the pupils have changed in their needs and requirements, have the teachers? In his article 'The good teacher', Clark (1996:2) says:

For better and sometimes for worse, there cannot be good education without good teaching, therefore the quality of teaching puts a limit on the quality of the education. And the quality of our education will, in turn, limit or enable the good that the next generation of teachers is able to do.

One could argue that there could be good learning without the teacher, and indeed there can. In fact, in the school's sixth form, as part of the pupils' preparation for higher education the school consciously adopts such a learning position. The teacher becomes more of a facilitator and less of a figure at the front of the class. GNVQs in particular are at the forefront of this approach empowering pupils to conduct their own learning experiences using the teacher when appropriate as a resource.

When the teacher is teaching and managing in the classroom, the quality of the teacher and therefore his or her teaching becomes an integral and crucial part of the equation. Clark (1962: 3) points out the qualities and skills that a good teacher will impart to pupils will:

- ***equip students for confident independent thought and action in an uncertain world;***

- *prepare students for a world of difference;*
- *know when to let students go (often before the student feels ready to be on their own).*

If this is to happen, then the teacher needs to be equipped to do that job. In addition, Clark (1962: 17)

goes on to listen to teachers who recognise that:

To teachers, the heart of good teaching is not in management or decision-making or pedagogical content knowledge. No, the essence of good teaching, for teachers, is in the area of human relationships. Teaching is good when a class becomes a community of honest nurturant and mutually respectful people.

I identify with the sentiments of this quotation and while I cannot speak for all teachers, I know many of my colleagues share them. This is evidenced by the latest school OFSTED (2000) report that specifically comments on both the value that the school provides as an educational institution, and the valuable relationships that the majority of teachers enjoy with the pupils. The report recognises that this contributes to the purposeful atmosphere in the school and its effectiveness. The argument is that not only has society an obligation to adequately train the teachers for the start of the C21st, but also to ensure that selection or election for the profession ensures that people with the appropriate interpersonal skills, empathy and sympathy together with patience and a love of children are the ones who are selected for training.

So how are we going to get the teachers of today and tomorrow to deliver what the 'clients' require? It is only recently that research has started to take place on how teachers think, speak and relate to their students. The British Educational Research Association (BERA) is one of a number of research groups that has been involved in attempting to focus the educational research movement on the contribution that a growing number of researchers are making to this field. It is the recognition that, as practitioners, teachers have a skill level, a motivation and a developed expertise drawn from their practice in the classroom. For many years, research has focussed on the external manifestations of observed practice without involving the often intangible and difficult to articulate qualities exhibited and demonstrated by teachers, in their day-to-day work. These features are the very essence of what teachers are and what makes so many of them experts in their field. This recognition of listening to what teachers have to say, enabling them to undertake an examination of their own practice and the encouragement to reflect on that practice is growing in strength and acceptance in the world of educational research. The Teacher Training Agency (TTA) has been a body that is now actively encouraging teacher research activity and is providing financial resources to support it. The TTA has also written teacher

Action Research in schools into its criteria for the NPQH award. The clear message being that it now wishes the Headteachers to recognise the values to be accrued from such activity, and also to create school cultures where this sort of research is the norm not the exception.

The work of Whitehead, (1993) Evans (1995), Eames (1995), Hughes, (1996), Laidlaw, (1997), Lomax, (1997), and Holly, (1997), have all created living educational theories to explain their own professional work and learning. Whitehead (1998: 1) in his article to the American Educational Research Journal is anxious to:

Raise the possibility that such educational theories offer the most valid forms of explanation in the world today for explaining the educational actions of teachers with their pupils and students.

‘The good teacher’ A paper was given to the Educational Research Group at Bath University by Christopher M Clark of Michigan State University in June 1996.

In the paper Clark offers three ‘portraits’ of a good teacher, formed from three educational research perspectives.

1. The process and the product.
2. Teacher thinking research.
3. Teacher knowledge.

For information he draws on three sources, empirical research on teaching, the voices of the teachers themselves and what pupils have to say about good teaching. Clark 1996: 2) says:

There cannot be good education without good teaching, therefore the quality of the teaching puts a limit on the quality of the education, and the quality of our education will, in turn, limit or enable the good that the next generation of teachers is able to do.

The author has used his own experiences as a teacher, and as a parent as the basis for the paper. He makes the statement that knowing what makes a good teacher will not in itself solve all the problems that face the process involved in teaching and learning, but it may help. In Clark’s eyes, a good teacher:

- Equips students for confident independent thought and independent actions in a uncertain world.
- Prepares students for a world of difference.
- Knows when to let students go (often before the student feels ready to be on his own).

If the teacher can create and manage to maintain a highly motivated learning community, everyone has an interest in everyone else’s learning. This could not be more clearly seen

than in the Year 11 class taken by ANS in the academic year 1995/6. From the interview responses the interest shown by the group in its progress comes through quite clearly.

Clark goes on to list factors that he recognises and considers to make a good teacher.

While this is a personal view given by Clark, there are clear similarities between his factors and those recognised by ANS, GGS and the pupils. The factors are:

- Affirmative personality
- Good humour and encouragement
- Leading by example
- Competent and knowledgeable in his subject area
- Open to new ways and approaches
- Patient and recognises that people develop at different speeds
- Builds on individual strengths
- Character has to be cultivated not imposed
- Gives respect to and shows an interest in his pupils
- Is a human being in his own right with all the weaknesses, frailties and vulnerabilities
- Puts energy into promoting his class and its accomplishments to the notice of others.
- Gives responsibility to pupils and gives support in the background to give confidence without threat.
- Gives praise when it is earned and deserved.

What do the researchers say?

The question 'what makes a good teacher' is fundamental to research in education.

Research has followed one of three traditions.

1. The Process - product approach.

This began in the early 50s, and after successful training programmes of military personnel it turned to teacher training. The hypothesis was that the process would be successful if task analysis, behavioural reinforcement and testing and measuring was done, good teaching would emerge. The process bit of the research refers to the visible and audible behaviour of the teacher, the product refers to the objectively measurable results of teaching expressed as achievement scores. Clark (1996:8) '*The good teacher, in this framework, is the one whose students achieve the highest scores on tests of knowledge and skill following instruction*'. The research programme is concerned with describing the teaching skills and behaviours that distinguish between effective and less effective teachers.

Over the last 40 years using sophisticated recording and measurement techniques, many researchers have been working towards 'What makes a good teacher?' Brophy and Good (1986) summarise the findings of the product - process research, and give the answer as '*a teacher who is well organised, efficient, task orientated and business like*'.

Brophy and Good (1986: 361) go on to say:

Students achieve more in classes where they spend most of their time being taught or supervised by their teachers rather than working on their own (or not working at all.) These classes include frequent lessons in which the teacher presents information and develops concepts through lecture and demonstration, elaborates this information in the feedback following responses to recitation or discussion questions, prepares the students for the follow up set work activities by giving instructions and going through practice examples, monitors progress on assignments after releasing the student to work independently, and follow up with appropriate feedback and re-teaching when necessary. The teacher carries the content to the students personally rather than depending on the curriculum materials to do so, but conveys information mostly in brief presentation followed by recitation or application opportunities. There is a great deal of teacher talk, but most of it is academic rather than procedural or managerial, and much of it involves asking questions and giving feedback rather than extended lecturing.

Clark (1996: 11) recognises in summary that the good teacher is:

Well organised, enthusiastic and direct. The process of rapid cumulative coverage of academic content, with clear feedback and remedial instruction when necessary, leads to superior performance on tests of facts and skills.

Research on teacher thinking

This type of research started in 1975 and concerns itself with the mental lives of teachers - the planning, decision making, beliefs and theories that visibly guide and influence teacher action. The challenge of this type of research was to describe and understand the rationality underlying good teaching. In conclusion to this section, Clark (1996:8) observes '*The mental lives of teachers are at least as important to understanding and supporting the profession as are their visible behaviours*'.

Research on teacher knowledge

Here Clarke (1996:13) states:

This paradigm takes the position that what is more important and most neglected in teaching is the teacher's knowledge of the subject matter that he or she teaches.

When good teachers who know their subject well are teaching, Clarke (1996: 14) recognises that they have what Claude Levi-Strauss calls a '*conversation with the situation*'.

This conversation takes place in the mind of the teacher as she or he reorganises academic knowledge about Hamlet or Photosynthesis or the civil war to accommodate to local knowledge about the lives and minds of the children to be taught.

The good teacher can act as a translator from hard technical facts of the subject into words and images that the children can understand and relate to. The problem recognised by Wilson, Shulman and Richart (1987: 16) is that all children will interpret knowledge in different ways so teachers will always have a problem.

The good teacher, then, must not only know how to manage, give feedback, make practical plans and wise decisions. She must be more than a performer, more than a thinker. The good teacher must also be a practical scholar, a student of academic disciplines and a fluent translator.

What do teachers say – Clarke (1996: 17)?

To teachers, the heart of good teaching is not in management or decision-making or pedagogical content knowledge. No, the essence of good teaching, for teachers, is in the arena of human relationships. Teaching is good when a class becomes a community of honest nurturant, and mutually respectful people.

The cultivation of self-esteem Clark recognises from his conversations with hundreds of teachers is high on their list of priorities. The good teacher emerged from these observations as having:

1. Good humour.
2. An enthusiasm for teaching.
3. An openness in admitting mistakes.
4. An ability to express love, care and respect.
5. A personality trait which takes children seriously.
6. A will to support other colleagues and who is open to their support.
7. An ability to find good in their pupils individually and collectively.

What children say?

Children are good judges of what makes a good teacher and they judge them on four fundamental human needs.

1. To be known
2. To be encouraged

3. To be respected

4. To be led

In children's eyes, the good teacher:

- Treats pupils as intelligent people
- Knows who we are and what we are like
- Treats us fairly by treating us as individuals
- Explains why he teaches and acts the way he does
- Talks about his life outside school and is interested in the children's lives
- Has a sense of humour and can be serious
- Explains concepts in interesting and unforgettable ways
- Does not humiliate us
- Loves teaching
- Helps us and allows us to learn from one another
- Puts the children first

Appendix 12

Alan Shelton video tape 1 12.10.96

Throughout these videos, Alan will be referred to as A. The commentary is what is observed and at the end of this, I will give a summary and my interpretations and analysis. It is difficult to hear much teacher/pupil dialogue on this video because the camera was too far away from the action. To take camera shots from any nearer would have affected the interchange however so much of the interpretation has to be done by inference. The words in bold and italic are Alan's comments in his review after the video was taken. The words in italic bold and quote marks are the words picked up by the microphone during the recording. The words in italic are Alan's comments on reviewing the video later.

1. The video starts with me giving the date and maths set to be videoed. It is break time and there is the normal background noise of the school at break.
2. Before the start of the lesson Chris asks 'A' a question about his homework. A crosses one arm and puts one hand on his head and avoids immediate eye contact at the start of the verbal interchange, but is looking at the work being shown to him by the pupil.
3. He touches his mouth, puts his hand back to his head and starts to give his answer.
4. His body posture now becomes more open as he turns to face the pupil and there is the start of eye contact.
5. As A makes eye contact he smiles, as does the pupil.

I was keen to reward his questioning, but found it difficult to make useful sense of what he had written.

6. He continues to explain the problem to the boy by pointing at the work the boy has done and finally makes full eye contact with the boy at the end of the explanation sequence.
7. A then moves to Kirsty and again does not initially make eye contact but speaks to Kirsty and refers to her work by pointing at it and is clearly answering her query. He leans over her in a non-threatening way so reducing the height differential and Kirsty makes a point to him in explanation to his comments. She gives two glances in his direction, but A does not receive this eye contact. A is however listening to her response and can be heard to say '*Ah*' as her explanation becomes clear to him and he changes his body position slightly.
8. The camera then cuts to a general panorama of the class at work and most appear to be on task. As the shot pans by A, he is still engaged in conversation with Kirsty.
9. The shot pans to the front of the class where a girl has her hand up.
10. It is now 12.05, 20 minutes into the lesson.

11. Shot pans back to A and Kirsty. A continues to explain in a quiet voice and in shot behind is a pupil out of his seat and Sophie Marsh has her hand up. The conversation with Kirsty continues and she now smiles and is deep in thought in response to A's questioning, and A nods in agreement with her responses.
12. He is still pointing at the work Kirsty has done. Kirsty smiles again.
13. There is some but not excessive background noise of the class at work.
14. Kirsty continues to make glancing eye contact with A and you hear him say '*brilliant - that's fine*'. Kirsty smiles again.
15. The shot moves onto A leaning over a boy, and while helping him, you see A's eyes go round the table to field a question from another pupil to which he gives a quick answer. He looks down at the pupil's book while still answering the query from across the table.
16. You hear A say '*Good stuff*' followed by a smile of encouragement to a pupil out of shot. The questioner then comes into shot and both he and his friend are smiling.
17. A rubs his head and then continues to give his undivided attention to the original pupil. The pupil looks at him and the camera then pans around the classroom again.
18. A stands up, looks around and asks for an exercise book from another pupil which he obviously wants to use as an example or to satisfy a query that A has about the work covered.
19. A pupil moves through the shot, the rest of the class remain seated and seem to be on task. A returns with another pupil's work and looks through it standing above the pupil, he then returns the work to its owner.
20. He lowers himself to pupil level and again works with the pupil helping and encouraging him.
21. A is heard to say '*brilliant*'.
22. A is working through an example with Chris Roberts, and in the background two boys who are now off task throw a pen into the air and catch it.
23. A now gives eye contact to the pupil he is working with, but it is not received by the boy who continues to look at his work
24. A rubs his chin again and points to work in the exercise book.
25. There are sounds of pupils nearby discussing maths problems and working through them. At this point A and the pupil are working and talking together as they work out the lines of the equation. A touches his head with his finger.
26. Another pupil's hand can be seen in the air in the background of the shot.

27. A is still explaining the workings of the problem and he wrinkles his face as he is explaining. He now looks at the pupil having given him the explanation and is clearly allowing the pupil to explain his reasoning of the situation.

This was the crux of the test and it was difficult to describe helpfully without giving away the solution.

28. A then considers the response the pupil makes, and shakes his head to indicate that he does not agree with the response the pupil makes.

I want Chris to own the solution.

28. There is a flicker of a smile on his face as he points to something at the end of the classroom as an explanation.

29. A then says *'let me ask you another question'* and touches his head with his finger again. A makes eye contact with the pupil as the pupil gives A an explanation.

30. The same hand at the front of the class is still up as seen in the background shot.

31. The pupil now gives another explanation and A touches his temple again. A receives this explanation and then says *'Try it - write it down...'* and clearly sets him a task to do.

32. A stands up and moves off to Jessica and acknowledges a request from the other side of the room and says *'I will be with you in a moment'*.

33. He makes eye contact with Jessica while standing above her and uses his hands to elaborate the point he is making.

34. He wrinkles his eyes in a half smile of agreement at the point she is making. As he moves away from her he responds again to a statement she makes and smiles as he turns towards her again.

35. The girl at the front still has her hand up, A does not see her and A now answers a question from the table at the back of the room again using his hands to elaborate and smiling.

36. A now moves across the room to Sophie Marsh and leans over her.

37. They engage in conversation about Sophie's problem. 'A' nods in agreement with her explanation and echoes a summary of what he thinks she is saying back to her.

38. You hear A say *'OK that's about it'*.

39. Using some of Sophie's previous work, A flicks back in her book to help her understand the problem.

40. When Sophie understands the point, A agrees, stands up and touches his head again giving the impression that help session is over, but he continues to reinforce the point he has just made so that Sophie fully understands it. There is a lot of eye contact through out the interchange.

41. The clock now reads 12.15, half way through the lesson.
42. A moves to Niyaz as another student enters the room.
43. The camera pans across the front of the class where the same girl still has her hand up.
(There is no record to show it, but she must have taken it down after the previous try and has put it up again now that she feels that she might catch A's attention.)

Jenny has real patience.

44. A boy at the back of the class also has his hand up.
45. Generally the class still seem to be on task, and there is a quiet working noise.
46. A talks to the visiting student, her entry does not cause any interruption to the work in action.
47. The visitor leaves and A moves to the girl at the front with her hand up.
48. He leans over her, she smiles and launches into her query.
49. They both smile at each other.
50. A seems to start many of his conversations by keeping his eyes at a neutral point and then brings them to make full eye contact with the pupils as his explanation goes on.

*I am conscious of the work and its understanding being the problem we both have.
Therefore I focus on it. If praising or disciplining, I will look at the student.*

51. The girl smiles again.
52. Andrew Whiting appears at A's shoulder with a query and A goes to the front of the class to get paper for him.
53. A then goes on to distribute paper to those who have requested it, and acknowledges the pupil at the back with her hand in the air and indicates that he will be with her once he has answered a more pressing question from the pupil in the corner.
54. He stands by the girl and gives an answer to her question accompanied by using his hands again.
55. The camera pans towards Jessica and there is a general hubbub of work noise in the room.
56. At this point there has not been one occasion when A has raised his voice or had to reprimand a pupil.
57. Jessica is now talking long distance to A who is listening with his head on one side and making firm eye contact with her.
58. He now leans forwards to add to his explanation by pointing at her work.

59. Through out this interchange his face is very open and there is a half smile present.
60. He then smiles fully and wrinkles his face again as he looks through the exercise book.
61. There is now a long distance shot of A still talking to Jessica with the class working around them.
62. He scratches his head and shrugs his shoulders as he uses his hands to enhance his explanation, and he moves forwards and backwards towards and away from Jessica.
63. He finishes with Jessica and moves across to Emma whom he put off earlier.
64. He lowers himself to look over her shoulder at her work.
65. The camera then pans across the table and back to A.
66. A moves to Cordelia and he makes firm eye contact with her while keeping a distance from her and standing very upright.
67. There is an increase of noise in the room and someone is heard whistling.
68. A moves backwards and forwards while talking to Cordelia.
69. He then moves onto Jonathan.
70. When he talks to him, he leans down towards him, answers the question and then moves onto the next boy.
71. The camera then focuses on a table where Douglas and Nicky are clearly in dialogue over a question and helping each other to answer it. (Remember this was one of the positive attributes of ANS 's style of teaching mentioned by Annie Martin and Shane Morton from the previous Year 11 group.)
72. Throughout this sequence of shots, there is evidence in the background of other pupils at work engaged in dialogue with each other.
73. The shot then passes to A at the front of the class with Jennifer again.
74. There is a general pan of the classroom with some pupils now getting restless as it is almost at the end of the lesson, but nevertheless most still seem to be on task.

I thought I visited more of the group. I aim to talk to the entire group in any lesson, but often do not realise this. I will move to the noise and use my presence to quell disruptions and turn it to a more work focused activity.

The tape then stops at this point as I seem to have taped over the lesson with the start of ANS's next didactic lesson 3.12.96. Not a disaster though as I have caught the essence of the lesson and Alan's style when working with individuals and small groups.

ANS Video Tape 2 3.12.96

1. MAB is seen introducing the tape, giving details about the group, the date and the maths set.
2. The video opens with a shot of the clock, it's 11.45 and pupils are coming in from break and starting to settle down. It is the same group as in the previous video.
3. ANS appears scratches his head starts giving out books and ensuring that all pupils have all that they need for the lesson. The lesson hasn't started yet, but he is obviously doing a quick check as to the whereabouts of absentees.
4. The bell is heard to go and A immediately starts the lesson, he moves to the side of the room and can be heard directing pupils' thoughts back to the previous lesson. He says: *'Last lesson we did algebra and you tried to make sense of that— now it's my job to make sense of the sense that you tried to make of it'*.
5. A Comment *'Ugh nice clear start'*.
6. A seems relaxed and sure of himself and there is an air of purpose about this brisk start to the lesson.
7. He moves to the white board and starts to revise the work covered during the last lesson.
8. There is a pause while he fixes his gaze on someone who is not paying attention. He says nothing, but attention is regained and A moves back to his presentation on the board.
9. A starts by putting an example on the board and compliments the group.
10. *'You were getting quite good at this'*.
11. He asks a specific question to Chris and an open question to the group, and when he gets the response he wants he says *'excellent'*.
12. He asks a specific question to Simon and he organises how he wants the response by asking pupils to put their hands up if they know the answer.
13. There is a deluge of hands and the correct answer is given to which he responds *'brilliant'* and *'excellent'*.
14. The camera pans around the room while A is heard working out an example on the board.
15. The class is very attentive.
16. Some pupils say the answers out loud and again A gives a gentle reminder to put hands up rather than shout out the answers.
17. A clearly wants this part of the lesson to be verbal as he tells Chris not to write anything down.

18. A moves around the room and a number of pupils have their hands in the air ready to answer the questions.
19. The camera pans back and forth across the class and all the pupils seem to have their attention on A while he is working on the board.
20. The camera pans to the work on the board.
21. At this point A gently ribs the class and his face breaks into a smile as he gets a cheerful response to his humour.
22. A encourages the group to look back in their books if they don't know the answer to his questions.
23. He asks a girl at the front to give him the answer and a voice off camera is heard to say: *'Oh yes I remember this now'*.
24. A selects a response from the back of the class which is correct and again says *'excellent'*.
25. He then asks Sophie to remind him of an earlier response. The camera pans to Sophie who seems to be engaged in thinking about the question being asked, and at one point A asks a rhetorical question and you can see Sophie mouth the correct answer to herself.
26. *Revision of mental arithmetic and recognition of Algebra. You have to get a feeling of 'can do'/success to teach Algebra well.*
27. *'Excellent, that's exactly right,'* is heard from A in response to Sophie's reply.
28. A still working examples on the board and eliciting responses from the group.
29. It is now 11.50 and A is bringing this revision session to an end and is about to start the lesson proper.
30. A encourages the group to use a calculator to answer his question.
31. The camera pans round the room and most pupils are seen using their calculators to work out the answer that someone out of shot then gives to A. A responds.
32. A is circulating around the room encouraging and pushing for accurate answers. He touches his face a lot.
33. A mildly rebukes a pupil for not having his calculator.
34. A touches the back of his head and then responds to Jessica's answer in such a way that she obviously feels good about it. She smiles while answering and the boy next to her smiles as well. (Was he pleased for her or pleased that he got the answers correct as well?)

35. A then encourages the group to do the 6 examples on the board in their exercise books and goes onto say: *'If any of those don't make sense then you must ask now'*.
36. I am always trying to get them to question. This is a conscious theme of all my work with Yr. 10 and 11.
37. He moves around the class again, encouraging work and moves to the back of the class talking to pupils as he goes.
38. He leans over touching a pupil's book, smiles and gives an encouraging response to a question.
39. Pupils are asking questions as he moves, and A responds as he moves to the board again.
40. It's 11.53am
41. A starts to write a question on the board for the next part of the lesson.
42. He gives instructions to the group about what they are to do after they have written the question down, and indicates that this question is to be the main focus for the rest of the lesson.
43. A puts his hands on his hips as he moves around the room.
- 44. No significance in this ?**
45. There is dead silence
46. A is prowling around all the time looking at pupils' work.
47. He touches his face, looks over pupil's shoulders and there is playful repartee between him and some of the pupils.
- 48. A sense of humour is vital.**
49. He then asks the group the reason for 'factorising' and again there is playful banter as the pupils give a variety of answers.
- 50. As a model to them, why be distant and dry and unhelpful? i.e. unapproachable?**
51. He encourages them to finish quickly while he writes the answers on the board.
- 52. At 12.00 he says 'at the end of the lesson you will go out having seen examples of the two reasons why factorisation is important'.**
53. The camera pans around the room to pupils at work and A jests about the values of Maths lessons which stirs the group into conversation.

54. A does not leave the group to work for too long before he moves on at pace, keeping the group active all the time.
55. More examples on the board -- he writes 'simplification'.
56. A mildly chastises Sophie in a humorous way, but he clearly makes his point.
57. Camera pans to the group all working and copying off the board.
58. A goes back to the word 'simplification' and adds 'makes things easier'.
59. Camera pans to a pupil writing in her book and then catches a pupil yawning.
60. A is heard talking to Niyaz in the background.
61. He asks questions and pushes her to explain how she has worked out her answer.
62. Niyaz and Sophie look puzzled.
63. Back to A at the board with questions from the group prompting him into justifying his answers and he responds '**good point**' to something that Niyaz says
64. He asks Jenny to respond to his work by encouraging her to '**talk about anything at all**' in relation to the example on the board.
65. Jenny responds, and A builds on that response with lots of working through the examples on the board and responding to the quips from the group.
66. **Compare back to what they know. This builds secure foundations and I can therefore go on.**
67. A is reassuring to the group again in stating that the principles of this work they have covered before.
68. He moves backwards and forwards to and from the board giving examples and asking questions from the group, and getting responses.
69. Again there is mild chastise, A says '**That's good**' to a boy that calls out, '**but if you are going to answer put your hand up**'. (This is not a put down for the boy but the matter is firmly dealt with).
70. There are lots of hands up to answer the question he has just posed, and he laughs and smiles with the pupil he has just told off so that a positive relationship is maintained. His eyes wrinkle.
71. In fact, he goes back to the same boy who has now put his hand up and gets him to answer the question, and presses him for the answer.
72. A puts another example on the board.
73. In the background a pupil is heard to say '**I get it**'.

74. It's 12.05.
75. A reads out the question from the board then stares hard at it as he is obviously thinking about the next stage of his presentation.
76. Plus how long before letting them try some. Short expositions interspersed with their work.
77. He touches his head and looks around the room with wide questioning eyes at a whistle that is heard off camera. He then smiles. (No chastisement is given but he has let the pupil know non verbally that the whistling should stop, which it does.)
78. The camera pans to pupils at work and others at play and then finds A adjusting the blind at the back of the room.
79. A then moves forwards to drive the group on again asking for responses to his questions.
80. Hands are seen in the air, and Chris is asked for a response.
81. A smiles, wrinkles his eyes and then asks Chris to explain how he has worked out the answer.
82. ***'Hang on a minute, I can't hear what Chris is saying because some of you are talking'***. Again mild rebuke because there is actually little noise in the room at this time.
83. A pupil at the back of the room gives a response to which A responds ***'excellent'***.
84. A is writing the solution on the board. ***'OK, very good'***.
85. A puts another example on the board - he says ***'Difficult,- do what you can - work through sensibly - what you are trying to get out of this is.....'***.
86. A moves around the class again talking to individuals about their work.
87. ***I am nervous about what they know. I am keen for success to push them on.***
88. There is a girl with her hand up, A leans across the table touches his face and answers the question and points to her book and another book on the same table.
89. As A moves round the room he is clearly looking at responses in pupil's books and helping understanding by explanation and by reference back to earlier work.
90. ***I walk around the room to sort out an overall view of where the class are.***
91. He smiles as he talks to a girl on the front table and points to a boy's book as he passes.
92. He seems able to take in a variety of pupil responses all at the same time.

93. A refers back to some previous work in the girl's book then moves onto other pupils who have their hands up.
94. Again moving and looking as he goes.
95. *I need to be mobile; it helps them to ask questions, and allows me to be personal.*
96. He calls for attention by saying '*Sh, sh, sh - Mark, - Emma*'. This gentle prod brings the class back to attention and then he starts to go over the work on the board.
97. During this time there is a little shared sarcastic humour at which the class chuckle, and then he gets back to working the example.
98. It's 12.20.
99. '*Most of you when I am walking round the class haven't done that,*' he says as an observation about their response to work on the board. He points to the board and then moves around the class talking with individuals and pointing out errors.
100. The camera pans to the board as A works out the answers to the questions.
101. A then asks the group to use the examples on the board to help them to answer the questions he then writes up.
102. The camera watches him write them up. There is silence in the class as he does it. The pan then shows the class working.
103. '*Keep it neat*', A talks about how he wants the questions writing in their books.
104. Again A moves around the room helping the boys at the back, leaning over to look at books as he goes.
105. He smiles and jokes with individuals, and there is friendly banter as he adds a more difficult example to the 5 on the board.
106. The group is very quiet as they are working through the examples.
107. He leans over towards the camera as he talks very quietly on an individual basis to a pupil at a table.
- I am keen to keep general noise to a minimum and maintain a good working atmosphere.*
108. He smiles and then uses other pupils at the table to help the boy understand the solution to his query.
109. The camera pans to a boy writing and A is heard to say '*It's not a race*'.
- It's 12.15.

110. A leans over a pupil at the back of the class then moves to the front to help there. Each time as he moves, he talks to pupils as he goes and points to their work.

111. Generally a quiet working environment at this time.

112. Niyaz asks a question to which he replies '*that's a good question*'; - he moves towards her and leans over her shoulder.

113. It's 12.20, A looks at the clock and is clearly assessing how much time there is left in the lesson.

Yes I want them to leave successfully and want to know more.

114. He then moves on to help a girl with her hand up answers her query, and then moves to the board to write up the next example for the group to work on.

115. He touches his head and face a lot.

116. Having put two more questions on the board, he moves to the back of the room and continues his 1: 1 work with individuals. Again he leans over to make contact with them and again points to their work in the exercise books.

117. Sophie attracts his attention and A moves towards her puts his hands behind his back, leans over and looks at her work.

118. He answers a long-distance query from a girl at the other end of the table who holds her book up for him to look at.

119. 'Let's check some answers to see how you have got on with the first few'. He moves to the board.

120. Again there is a running dialogue between him and the pupils as he starts to give the solutions.

121. ' Before leaving it there, just have a look with me at No 6', he says encouragingly and asks for group participation.

122. The class don't respond instantly so he starts calling out the names of pupils who he sees are not paying attention: '*Matthew, - Rob*'.

123. A then launches into an explanation of this more difficult question: '*Mark - Kirsty just watch a minute*', these are pupils who are not paying attention.

124. A works through the solution receiving responses from the group as he goes. He moves away from the board and says. '*Don't race, if you get stuck on one think how I can help you*'.

125. He looks at the clock again, then rubs off the previous work and is clearly thinking about what the next move is.

126. He moves around the class again giving individual attention, leaning over and having 1:1 conversations.

127. The camera pans to pupils working.

128. A opens a window, smiles at Kirsty and talks to her about her work.

129. He then leans over another boy on the same table, wrinkles his face and gives more help. During this response, A frowns a bit and I interpret that as A thinking about how best he can respond to the boys incorrect answer.

The question is incorrect in the book.

130. The camera pans to the boy's book and A pointing to work that has been done. The work seems to be very neat for a boy.

131. A writes in the book as the pupil responds to his questioning.

132. There is a close up shot of Kirsty speaking to A across the table.

133. A background shot of a girl with her hand in the air and then a general pan round the room shows several more.

134. A is still bending over Robert working through his problem.

135. He then moves to the front of the class and again calls the class to attention to talk about the next piece of work.

It's 12.28.

136. A starts to work through questions 7,8,9 asking Sophie to give her answers. Others also respond, and A is heard to say ***'good, excellent, yes, yes'*** as others give answers. ***'brilliant, yes perfect,'*** is his response to one girl's answer.

137. Sophie gives her answer, A says ***'very good, brilliant, excellent, well done'***.

138. A is now anxious to move on, and he gets the group to finish the question they are on saying ***'Any questions from any of these, any you are not sure of?'*** he pauses and then moves on to a new heading on the board.

139. A writes the heading 'Solving Equations' and in response to a shouted out comment says ***'hold on a second, lets go through this and if you are not sure you can ask me'***.

140. He puts an equation under the heading and then says ***'going back to Year 8 work here'*** which is a clear indication to the group that they should all feel comfortable with what is about to come.

Yes.

141. The camera pans round the room as there is gentle humour and quips between A and the class.

142. A laughs and apologises to Kirsty for a comment that the camera does not pick up and then goes back to the work on the board.

143. He pauses and says '*Sophie*' and waits for her to pay attention.

144. A again explains from the board how the method works, and at this time the only voice to be heard is A's.

145. At this time he is doing straight didactic teaching.

146. The camera pans around the room and all the pupils are attentive and looking at him.

147. A asks a question and pauses expecting an immediate response. The class are slow in doing so and so he says, '*That took too long, here is another question*'. This seems to be easier for the group to answer and he got a better response from them.

148. After working through more examples on the board, he says '*Take a break and put your pens down and look this way*'. They all do so and he launches into a quiz question with the '*I am thinking about two numbers which when multiplied together = 0, what can you tell me about this number? - Don't shout out, put your hands up. Tell me something about this number, no matter how trivial*'.

149. He gets a series of responses from the group. A forest of hands goes into the air and noise ensues.

150. '*Sh, sh, sh, lets stick with this for the moment*' as he calls the class to order.

151. He directs a question at Matthew who starts to respond, and A explains the reasoning behind the solution again.

152. The camera pans around the room and A is heard writing on the board in the background.

It's 12.37.

153. A is working and teaching from the board and there is silence in the room as the pupils write down the work.

154. A asks the group to think about solutions for themselves.

155. The camera pans to a group who seems to be slightly less attentive now.

156. Niyaz asks a question and she looks puzzled. A gives a specific explanation to her and makes direct eye contact with her. You can then hear her say '*I get it now*'.

157. A continues to throw questions to the group and get responses back.

158. Matthew is heard interrupting and being silly and A says '*Matthew*' and you hear Matthew say '*Sorry*', the explanation goes on.

159. A keeps referring back to the fact that the group have done this before and asks them to think it through (This has got to be a confidence building strategy).

Yes.

160. Work on the board continues, again with responses from the group.

161. The camera pans round the room and I feel that there is a quiet tiredness in the group - no noise, but pupils are fiddling with pens and not giving their full attention.

It's 12.45.

162. There is a big smile from A and laughter from the group to a particular response. His smile quickly disappears however as the group get back on task.

163. Encouraging open-ended questions gets the group thinking about extensions to the work.

164. A starts to reflect back on areas covered at the start of the lesson and encourages the group to bring those skills to bear to answer these more challenging questions.

165. There is absolute quiet. A asks for answers.

166. Still work being done on the board and pauses when he doesn't feel he has got the groups full attention.

167. A starts to speak, a pupil interrupts and A says again, *'Don't shout out, I am not asking a question at the moment, I am telling you what we said before'*, And continues with the revision explanation.

It's 12.48.

168. A still explaining on the board and says to Chris *'is this taking a toll on you?'* Chris out of shot is clearly flagging. A smiles and moves back to the board to continue the work.

169. A thinks, looks at the board and then put 3 more equations up which he explains will be developed for homework.

170. The camera pans round the room and shows most pupils still on task although the noise level is a little higher.

171. Then silence falls again and the three questions are attempted.

172. A now leads a discussion by Q and A to help a pupil query. A pupil off shot gives her answer to their question and asks, *'is that it?'* A smiles, shrugs his shoulders and says *'yes'*. - The penny has clearly dropped for the pupil.

173. A is now writing questions on the board, and in the background pupils are heard discussing solutions.

It's 12.52.

174. A is answering a query from a girl at the front of the class.

175. Homework has been written up on the board and A tells the class that it is to be done that evening.

176. This brings some queries from the group as many of them are on a school trip the following day. Nevertheless, A insists that it has to be done that evening and negotiates its possibility by explaining that they are easy questions and that they won't take long to do.

177. There is a general exchange of dialogue as the pupils write the homework down.

178. A goes round the room checking entries and smiling.

179. The bell is heard to go, but no pupils make a move, and A indicates that he has more to say.

180. He checks on the number of pupils taking part in the school trip and encourages them to try and complete their homework.

181. The pupils then leave the room.

182. A pupil stays behind with a query, and A helps with an explanation that involves more work on the board. Neither A, nor the boy seem in a hurry to leave, and at the end of the explanation, A finishes with an encouraging remark about attempting the problem.

Appendix 13

The Year 9 problem year group KS 4 examination results

The long awaited results for this cohort arrived in August 1998. To remind the reader, this cohort were the pupils for whom a special behaviour initiative was devised in their Yr. 9, 1996/7, and for whom the Yr. 10 mentoring project was introduced in their Yr. 10 1997/8. This particular year group had been predicted as being of less than the school's average ability as an intake in Year 7 and had lived up to that prediction throughout their school career.

It was this cohort that was predicted as a potential academic disaster for the school from their Yr. 9 C.A.T results. The forward projection from those results being at best 43% of pupils achieving A* to C grades at G.C.S.E in the 1998 external examinations.

As a mark of the school improvement strategies put into place specifically with this group in mind, the following results were achieved in August 1998.

Table 10 KS4 Results 1998

% Of St John's pupils gaining 5 or more Grade	A* - C = 56.7
National average 5 or more Grade	A* - C = 47.8
St John's Boys gaining 5 or more Grade	A* - C = 50.4
National average 5 or more Grade	A* - C = 42.6
St John's Girls gaining 5 or more Grade	A* - C = 63.5
National average 5 or more Grade	A* - C = 53.2
% Of St John's pupils gaining 5 or more Grade	A* - G = 94.3
National average	A* - G = 88.4
St John's Boys gaining 5 or more Grade	A* - G = 92.2
National average 5 or more Grade	A* - G = 86.4
St John's Girls gaining 5 or more Grade	A* - G = 96.9
National average 5 or more Grade	A* - G = 90.5
% Of St John's pupils who achieved no passes	0%

National average

6.1%

Overall, a much better result than we had hoped for. While it was lower than we had had in previous years, it was much better than predicted. It did help to add to the school improvement argument that what the school had undertaken in School Improvement and School Effectiveness practices could at least in some part be attributed to the success of these pupils.

Appendix 14

The school self-esteem test and scoring procedure

**** Note this appendix entry has been word processed to fit the page format, but the information is as the paper was issued.**

Getting to know you.

Name

Year 7

Tutor Group Today's Date ----/-----/ 199

Please mark each statement in the following way:

If the statement describes how you usually feel, put a tick neatly (✓) in the column, 'Like me'.

If the statement does not describes how you usually feel, put a tick neatly (✓) in the column, 'Unlike me'.

Please do not put ticks anywhere except on the lines.

LIKE ME

UNLIKE ME

1. I enjoy my holidays.
2. I'm pretty confident.
3. There are lots of things about myself I would like to change.
4. I feel safe at school.
5. I read a lot
6. I often fall out with other pupils at school.
7. When I want to tell a teacher something I usually feel foolish.
8. I watch a lot of television
9. I have a low opinion of myself

LIKE ME

UNLIKE ME

10. I'm a lot of fun to be with

11. Usually someone has to tell me what to do
 12. I stick at school work until it's finished
 13. I can take care of myself.
 14. On the way to/from school I'm often by myself
 15. I like the way I look.
 16. I'm physically fit.
 17. My parents don't listen to me.
 18. I'm not doing very well in my lessons.
 19. My parents put too much pressure
on me to do well at school.
 20. I feel terrible if a teacher criticises me.
 21. I think most teachers like me
 22. I often feel lonely at school
 23. I like team games.
 24. I am happy with my weight.
 25. I think I am clever.
-

Not included with the paper:

The Scoring Key

Questions 1, 5, 8, 14, 23 are distracters and are not scored.

Questions 2, 4, 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, 21, 24, 25 should be given 2 marks if ticked 'like me'

Questions 3, 6, 7, 9, 11, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22 should be given 2 marks if ticked 'unlike me'.

Maximum self-esteem rating = 40

Questions 7, 11, 12, 18, 25 can be scored separately to give an indication of academic self-esteem.

Maximum academic self-concept rating = 10.

Appendix 15

A working document - perceptions of Mike Boshier's working practice: Susan Gibbs

I include below the documented write up that Susan gave to me at the end of her observational period. This is in note form and is copied verbatim from her field log. Susan has made categories for her data that supports her own work. The headings found in the working document below are the result of her analysis. As this is a verbatim transcription, I have not interfered with the headings as reported to me by Susan. In conversation with her about me, she decided to use these headings because she felt that they best described the various activities and character traits that she observed in me.

General comments

The comments below are my perceptions of Mike Boshier's professional practice rather than an analysis of the thinking underpinning his professional practice which is the focus of my research. This is a working document and if it is useful in helping validate what Mike has said about his professional practice. I will expand on some of the comments and give more specific comments to back up my observations (if Mike finds this account of my perceptions useful for his research). At this stage I have given brief examples and there is some repetition as I am still deciding how best to categorise my perceptions of Mike's professional practice.

My intention, at this point, is to describe Mike's professional practice as I see it and as a teacher who has been given the opportunity to observe Mike in a number of lessons. Although my perceptions will invariably be influenced by the collaborative interviews with Mike, I see this document in terms of my subjective perceptions of Mike's practice rather than as a joint analysis of his interactive thinking. The purpose of this document is therefore to support Mike's research and for him to use these perceptions as a means to validate his own research.

My role as a researcher

In terms of my research I am giving Mike copies of video recordings of his classroom practice and he will also receive copies of all transcripts of his lessons and of our conversational style interviews. My intention as a researcher is to describe the iterative thinking underpinning Mike's professional relationships with the pupils. My research study

is collaborative, hence my intention to make all the data available to Mike to explore with him the nature of his tacit knowledge rather than simply imposing my own analysis on the data I have collected.

Relationships with individual pupils

Self-esteem of pupils

Mike has a great awareness and sensitivity to individual pupils in the classroom. He always tries to ensure that he does not undermine the individual's self-esteem and makes amends if he inadvertently does this. This awareness of the pupil's self-esteem appears directly connected to the judgements Mike is making about each pupil's learning. Mike provides a supportive learning environment for the pupils and is aware of their emotional responses to subject matter. Mike appears to be making snapshot decisions about pupils judging by the mood in which they open their conversations. He also puts more pressure on some pupils than others depending on his assessment of their ability and self-esteem and the fluctuations in their moods. (Mike put more pressure on Laura than Isabel – he has higher expectations for Laura and expected her to be able to give a Biological explanation for the difference between a parasite and a virus because she has covered the work before. Other examples can be seen when Tom knew what to draw on the board, congratulating Leanne on her presentation even though it was confused).

Mike manages particular interactions with students in order to get the best out of them. He has referred to 'pulling individual students along' in order to get the best out of them and this is evident in his classroom interactions. For example, Mike has attempted to encourage Isabel to participate more by asking her questions that he thinks she can manage and therefore help to build her self-esteem and confidence. Another example is the directional focus of Mike's questions to Nick to try and ensure that he is more fully engaged in the lesson. He is relating to students as individuals and attempting to ensure that each individual achieves his or her full potential. Mike has certain students that he knows he can question to get useful and productive responses from e.g. Clare. He is able to use Clare when he does not receive the correct responses from others as both a teaching aid, and as a method of proving that the knowledge is available to the knowledge base of the group.

Management of individual student behaviour

Mike is conscious of whether the students are on task or off task and tends to 'switch them off' before behaviour becomes too disruptive. For example, Ollie and Tom are talking and

a clear word directed at them brings them back onto task quickly and almost unobtrusively. He has an awareness of where each student is at in terms of their learning and will bring them back onto task often simply by looking at the individual, changing his tone of voice or saying their name. The action Mike takes is almost a preventative action in that it takes place almost imperceptibly and sometimes only a particular student is aware of it. Mike will use humour or a form of reasoning when managing Year 12 or 13. For example, when two students were using the conservatory as means of coming into the lab (something students are encouraged not to do), Mike said, " Can I remind you all that the way into the lab is by the door". One of the students then looked sheepish and smiled. In the classroom context, Mike does not confront the students but manages their behaviour subtly. He has a caring and empathetic approach to the students he teaches. I think he is more prepared to make allowances for them or give them the benefit of the doubt than he would for a member of staff or a recalcitrant younger pupil in the school. This is possible because Mike has different expectations of the staff and of certain pupils in his role as Deputy Head. Mike's objective in the classroom is to develop a caring professional relationship with each of the pupils he teaches in order to support them with their learning and to help give them confidence to achieve their potential in 'A' level Biology. This objective is evident in the way he manages classroom behaviour.

Setting clear boundaries

For example on September 12th 1998, Mike gave them some homework and Ollie in a loud voice said, "but I thought the homework is the assignment", to which Mike replied " 'A' levels are good fun aren't they Ollie?" This is Mike using humour rather than reprimand to respond to Ollie but still making it clear that it is Mr Bosher who sets the work objectives, not Ollie.

Mike sets boundaries for the students in terms of his work expectations e.g. notes and dates for essays. He also calmly but firmly enquires why they are late in coming to lessons or in handing in homework, and makes it clear that this is not appropriate behaviour in his lessons.

Relationship between subject knowledge and the delivery of the lesson

Mike's presentation of himself in the classroom seems to depend on his confidence about his academic knowledge of the subject that he is teaching. He appears to use more imagery in his presentation of the subject content when he is confident about the material. He

makes more associations across different Biological concepts and more links to the relevance of these issues in every day life.

Mike seems to use himself as a resource and as a tool to present the subject content when he feels confident about the topic being covered. He seems to bring more humour into these lessons and use more dramatic gestures when teaching

When less confident about the subject matter, Mike's lessons are more didactic, less interactive and with specific reminders to the students that he is in control of the subject matter. When less confident, there is more of a deliberate and strategic assertion of himself and his knowledge.

Images and professional practice

By talking to Mike and observing his lessons, I have noticed that he sometimes perceives the subject content in the form of visual images. These either form the basis of his explanation of the Biological concept for the example he presents to the students or alternatively may actually project the visual image onto different members of the group to help them to develop their own understanding of the subject content. I would therefore suggest that imagery form a part of Mike's pedagogical content knowledge.

Persona

Although Mike is uncomfortable about referring to the term 'performing' in the classroom he appears to present a certain type of teacher role or persona in the classroom. This persona or image of himself as a teacher is that of someone who is in control and confident about his subject knowledge and his relationships with students. Mike's teacher persona is caring and compassionate but there is also a real sense of a self-contained individual. Although he uses himself in the classroom and can give most when the students meet him half way, he is not reliant on their approval or friendship.

Dealing with emotions

Mike gives a professional response to 'bolshiness' or aloofness from certain students. If the behaviour is out of character (e.g. Ollie not engaged), Mike directly questions the student to explore why they are interacting in this way.

With the students who have a slightly detached or impervious air, Mike looks beyond the behaviour to their responses and considers the responses rather than the tone of voice or the aloof demeanour presented by the student. He observes the demeanour but does not challenge it directly or show his irritation but appears to try and engage the student through their interaction with the subject matter. This is a subtle and non-confrontational way of developing a relationship with the students.

Performance and dramatic gestures

Although Mike does not give a theatrical performance in the lesson he does accentuate or exaggerate certain aspects of himself for effect. Mike uses tone of voice to express exasperation, and humour to make the point. He uses specific examples to focus the students' attention and keep them involved and interested in the lesson. He chooses every day occurrences in the students' lives and this can lead to interesting and amusing dialogue with Year 13.

Relationship between pupil interaction and delivery in lessons

The more the students meet Mike halfway, the more he uses himself while delivering the subject matter. He becomes more personally engaged and becomes more passionate about the subject matter. If the students are engaged, he uses more humour and makes more reference to his own personal experiences to substantiate what he is saying. If the students engage fully in the lesson, the discussion is more varied covering numbers of different examples from other areas of Biology and in relation to every day life.

Mike is very aware of the classroom dynamics or atmosphere and will often refer to the fact that he has dealt with something in a certain way due to the classroom atmosphere. He refers to 'dragging them along' because they are sluggish. Mike will comment on the quality of the group interactions when describing a lesson. In a highly interactive lesson Mike builds on the student responses and develops the lesson around those responses. The more engaged he is in the lesson the more quickly the time disappears for Mike and the more tired he is.

Relationships between the position of authority and teaching

There is no overt expression of authority in the classroom. The Year 13 students feel relaxed within the boundaries Mike has set for them. The Year 12 students may be a little more cautious, however, this may be because they are not a fully established group rather

than due to Mike's position of authority. Some of the students have suggested to other teachers that they are a bit apprehensive in Mike's lessons. This is not directly apparent although with both groups there have been some silences when the students have not had the knowledge to answer the questions. It may be that they are aware that Mike expects them to respond to questions in lessons and that he selects individuals by name based often on his judgement about their self-esteem and their ability to contribute. This approach is cognitively demanding of the students and requires them to be alert and proactive in lessons and prepared to respond to the questions.

Use of physical space

Mike uses the whole of the classroom while teaching as he asks questions and stimulates discussion he often moves to be in close proximity with the students he is talking to and will often interact with individuals and groups of students both during and after the lesson. He is therefore fully engaged at the task at hand and focuses on developing opportunities to interact with students during the lesson.

Appendix 16

An overview of my learning by Dr P Hazlewood - a conversation

I asked the Headteacher of the school for his observations of my learning. This opportunity emerged as the result of a conversation in another context, my personal Professional Development Review where the Headteacher, Dr Patrick Hazlewood made a statement that he had noticed significant changes in me since my role as Professional Development Manager had been established. I seized the opportunity for the conversation. It took place on 2.2.99 in the Headteacher's office and I recorded it on tape and transcribed it verbatim below. I have numbered each response so that I may add interpretation or comment after the transcription text. PKH is the Headteacher, and MAB is myself.

- 1. MAB - What I would like you to do is to identify the changes you have seen in me over the time that you and I have been in post. How am I helping people and how do I recognise my learning?*
- 2. PKH - When I first met you I was very impressed by your very presence. You always have a presence, and an almost natural charisma that goes with someone who is both a good teacher and someone who demands respect of those around him. As the Senior Teacher when I first came to this site, in 'Command Mode', I suppose the key words for you were efficiency, authority and no nonsense. Those were the things that really stood out and I suppose managing the site you seemed very comfortable, you had a very clear understanding and view of what the job was and a very clear mandate to get on with it and move it forwards, which you did. Since you moved up the echelon, it's happened in stages but since the movement to Deputyheadship there is a clear difference. You still have your previous facets but you now are very much directing. You have taken the concept of Manager as opposed to co-ordinator very very well indeed and I suppose my overwhelming impression is of someone who is not only in control but has a clear view of where they want to go. It is a pro-active route they want to go not that they have to be told. In fact that is one of the outstanding features, I don't have to tell you anything. You and I work very well as a team and we both have a clear view of where we are going.*
- 3. MAB- But that is your management style anyway. What you have done for me is to have given me permission to do things in my eyes. I don't feel that I have to ask your*

permission to do things, but I want to keep you informed of what I am trying to do. I feel a sense of trust I suppose.

- 4. PHK Absolutely – That for me is one of the great things, I have absolute trust. I know that we all make mistakes, but that by and large you will do the right things to the right people at the right time. – I have no problem with that. The things that you have taken on in the way of major challenges like ‘Investors in People’ and ‘Professional Development Reviews’ are actually complex, time consuming and difficult things to manage and you seem to be doing them with consummate ease. I recognise the hard work that goes on in the background. I suppose the key underpinning changes are the confidence with which you manage people and this is quite impressive. In a sense our teamwork is very good, you are the hard guy and that leaves me free to be pleasant most of the time.*
- 5. MAB - I am interested in that perspective because I see it the other way round.*
- 6. PKH - Well that’s interesting.*
- 7. MAB -The thing that I find difficult is to be hard on people.*
- 8. PKH - Yet my perception is that you are very honest.*
- 9. MA B - Ah! – I can be honest- I don’t mind being honest but I don’t like confrontation.*
- 10. PKH - Really?*
- 11. MAB - I don’t feel that I aggressively confront people. What I try to do is to tell them honestly what I think, and I see there is a difference.*
- 12. PKH - Well that’s interesting because the way your style comes across sometimes you are actually.... Your style suggests not only is that what you think, but that’s what you..... It’s almost what you honestly believe. It’s almost a no compromise situation. You are not doing it because ‘I said and therefore’, and that comes through. It is almost a strident sort of approach that you have.*

13. MAB - I'm not sure whether that's good or bad.

14. PKH - I think that's very good actually. When you have said something to people, they know exactly where they stand which is your openness and honesty and there are no comebacks on that. That is really good because if you are really going to have proper professional development and an honest review and people are going to move forwards then you have got to be like this. It's no good fudging the issues so I suppose in terms of learning, your learning has developed pretty rapidly and I think that the work you have been doing through your research has given you more contexts. It is almost like writing the chapters. Every time you do something, you see a chapter here and a chapter there and where you want to move the chapter forwards. I suppose it's the speed with which you have actually moved into the role. Most people when they move into Deputyheadship take 3 – 4 years to become fully acclimatised to the role. I could walk out of school now and be out all day and not give it a second thought because I know that whatever you do when I am gone you will do the right thing and you won't need to come for answers because you have a clear grasp of what to do and when to do it. That's really very reassuring. It's the speed with which you have achieved, that that is impressive.

15. MAB - Well that's really great to hear. It comes from your encouraging style. Obviously we have been testing each other out over a number of issues, and come to the same conclusions about the same issues and therefore I feel happier and more confident because I think, we think in the same way. What I think, you will think and that gives me the confidence to say OK let's do it that way then. Under previous regimes I have not been in a position to do that first of all, and I have not been given the mandate to make those decisions, nor have I felt that the way I feel was the same as that of the prevailing management ethos of the time. I have found this situation very cathartic and very powerful. I am a person who wants to make pragmatic decisions – I can't 'faff' about with peripheral things, it's got to be 'is this going to be of benefit to whatever? And what is the most pragmatic way of doing it to keep everyone sweet?'

16. PKH - Well that's a perfect illustration of your no nonsense approach. That's it in a nutshell. One of the outstanding things I have seen was during the full Governors

meeting when you launched into an answer and afterwards said to me 'Oh sorry'. Even MTL or MXW (previous Deputies now retired) with their long years of experience would not have done that and I thought it was very good. To me it was a really good example of proper teamwork. As a team we could actually respond without fear of saying the wrong thing or being out of place and that's great because the ultimate move is to become one team with whatever we do.

17. MAB - *Have you noticed any changes in the way I manage people or has the way I manage people just become more obvious to you?*

18. PKH - *It's a bit of both. It is more obvious because that's your key role, It's about managing people through their professional lives. I think you are now more precise about it. Having that 'Manager' mandate has placed responsibility firmly on your shoulders and you have accepted that responsibility totally. You know that that is the bottom line. You know that if professional development is not working that's your responsibility.*

19. MAB - *Yes that's exactly it. The conversation we had about the change from co-ordinator to manager was a very significant one for me. I was happy with either role, but the change did affect me in the fact that I now had to be more proactive.*

20. PKH - *That's the other part of your 'learning leap', that is that you recognise very clearly the difference in what we are trying to accomplish. I think another thing we both totally subscribe to is the concept of professionalism, and we are not prepared to compromise on people who are not prepared to become more professional.*

21. MAB - *What about the business ofI try really hard to be polite and co-operative, to be supportive and I am not sure that those roles always coincide with being a manager. I sometimes feel that I am not as supportive as I should have been. For example I felt I was unprofessional the other day and I am still concerned about it. Person X left me a note saying ' I had to park on the roundabout there was no where else, what are you doing about it?' I sent a memo back to this person with the reply 'I don't respond to memos like this'.*

22. PKH - *The very fact that you responded is bizarre but.....*

23. MAB - I know, but I was really cross about the situation, I had empathy with the problem but the memo did not say to me 'I must help this person'. Very quickly I got another note from the person concerned saying 'I am sorry if I offended you but the problem is.....!'

24. PKH - I think that it is quite important. The bottom line for you and I with the staff is that we are the final arbiters on matters of discipline and if staff challenge that then the response cannot be conciliatory. At a point we can try and find a solution, but I think your response was absolutely right. If people are prepared to be rude then they need a slap over the wrist. They don't talk to a professional colleague in that way.

25. MAB - But I didn't want to be rude in return because that doesn't help either. I did want my colleague to understand that this was an inappropriate way to communicate.

Can we move onto the more intellectual activities that I have been involved with. Do you see any change in the way I approach things? You have allowed me to talk to people that I have not talked to before like the consortium of Headteachers at the Swindon Conference, and I have found that challenging. You may or may not know that the great hang up that I have is that I have a lack of self-esteem about my intellectual ability.

26. PKH - That's interesting.

27. MAB - Early on, Jack Whitehead my Ph.D supervisor pushed me to identify why I was doing a Ph.D, and why I was interested in middle ability children. When I examined my career path, it seems to have been in my eyes second best all the way along the line. I got to the top as a Physical Educationalist and then I became aware of people's views of Physical Educationalists as being big on brawn but short in brain. I did an OU degree not a 'proper one' then I did an M.Ed. not a M.A or a MSc. I am beating myself unnecessarily.

28. PKH - Yes you are.

29. MAB - *Totally unnecessarily. I failed the 11 + and that's where it started.*

30. PKH - *Yes so did I.*

31. MAB - *Somewhere inside of me I have to prove that I am not as stupid as the world thinks I am. I know that the world does not really think that about me, but I feel I have to prove a point to someone. I did start the process of release from these silly thoughts about a month ago when I was having a similar conversation with MJC. Who said 'you don't have to prove anything to any one. The pressure you feel doesn't exist in reality'. For the first time I felt that maybe I don't.*

32. PKH - *That's really quite complex. Martin is quite right, you don't have to prove anything to anybody. The way you work, the way you operate, the quality of what you do the sheer dedication you put into it - you don't have to prove anything at all. Nor do you have to prove that you are intellectually capable, the way you discuss things, stand by a point, it's very clear, well understood. There is no problem with your intellect, it's fine. You are OK. But there is one thing, I recognise something in what you say because it has gone through my mind when I think about it. I have always had the problem with not wanting to be second best I have always wanted to do the best I can and I failed the 11 + as well. I went to a secondary modern school and it was a goddamned awful experience. In Nottingham you had to do two parts to the 11 +, Maths and English, and I failed the Maths part. Then I moved to another part of the city where you only had to pass the English part and I had already passed that so I went to the Grammar School. All the way through I have had this problem that I had got there by a devious route.*

33. MAB - *Wow!*

34. PKH - *All through that time, particularly through 'O' Levels I was bone-idle and got an interest in girls. Then I did a lot of running at college, sport was much more interesting than Physics and Chemistry. I did reasonably well both at 'A' Level and at University and in the end I pulled my finger out and as I went into my teaching career I started to feel that I wanted to be better at what I did. I couldn't be second best. I did my masters degree in the 80s- an M.Ed. and I was pushed to publish some of the work. Each time I did this, I achieved something and felt very good about it*

then I felt very inadequate because the more I read of other people's work the more I felt inadequate about mine.

35. MAB - That's interesting that you should say that because I have taken the process a stage further because I then say-What Ph.D. are you doing? 'Something in education,' Ah well, that's not the same as Astrophysics or Mathematics.

36. PKH - You poor soul.

37. MAB - I know it's bizarre, but it is taking me a long while to get it out of my head. I am doing it but the scar of the 11 + is very deep. I have got to do it, and by writing about it and moving to the front of the arena in which I now find myself I am being convinced by you and Jack Whitehead that when I finish this thesis I will be the world's expert in my field and when that moment of glory arrives I will celebrate. I do now feel much more positive about the whole issue than I did.

38. PKH - Its funny because a couple of years ago there was a thing about the quality of Ph.D.s and someone was being critical about some Universities and their standards of Ph.Ds and I felt very upset at the time. I wondered if mine was one of them, but if you look at Exeter University's reputation and my supervisor Ted Wragg you feel quite comforted. I think the underpinning issue for both of us is that we are always striving to do better. Because of that we are always recognising that what we do is not adequate, there is still something that we can do that will take it further forwards. I think that is one of the reasons why you are so successful. You have a string of degrees and qualifications and you are doing a Ph.D, these are tangible markers in your life programme. Once you have completed your Ph.D there will be a small space of time when you need to rest then you will start thinking 'what can I do next?'

39. MAB - That's already happened in my professional career

40. PKH - I am not sure if I have said this to you about your career but what you could have done was move into Headship. You have very quickly grasped the role of deputy and that naturally leads into Headship and probably into a small school in the first instance, but no problem.

41. MAB - Thank you.

42. PKH - I think the other part of learning is this enquiry. You don't see yourself moving through this phase, of developing your depth of knowledge, and the more reading you have done and the more directly you have applied that reading to each situation in school I think it is beginning to make a difference. I can see it even if you cannot.

43. MAB - Yes it's the process again, the journey. I think that without doubt because I have examined the morality of this – the school has had its money's worth out of me. I am very anxious to try and make my knowledge available to other people because for instance I can help people who are writing questionnaires. It seems a banal example, but the very research methodology that one applies to every day school life can be improved by the training received from undertaking research elsewhere. I think that those people involved in research do show a perception and an analytical approach to every day tasks.

44. PKH - Sometimes it's not even the intellectual depth of it, it's simply the way they approach it. They approach the problem with a sort of rigour. A lot of people are just stuck with approaching the problem. The researcher is the 'resolver' so that when they have resolved that problem they are looking where to go next.

45. MAB - It's a tactical approach isn't it? The only other question I would ask is have we just unlocked some latent potential ability in me or have I developed and learnt? Have I always been able to do it and now I have been given the opportunity?

46. PKH - No I think it has developed. You start with a certain latent level of ability, but it's a question of do you move it forwards or not. It's the process of controlling you and the environment. But what you are really doing is controlling your environment and manipulating it to change it.

47. MAB - That's a considered action. I feel confident in what I am doing 99% of the time. I feel confident and I do have a clear idea of how to resolve issues and so it's a matter of which tool I bring out of the tool bag.

48. PKH - *If you look at St John's when I first came here I saw the structure that was in place at the time. It always had at the end of its avenues of development a series of locked doors, very safe, but every door was locked. Every time someone wanted to go through one to do something there was no mechanism there for them to do so. When we changed the structure it was very risky at times. All the doors were suddenly there to be opened. Firstly I helped people to recognise where the doors might be and secondly there was a serious challenge to recreate a dynamic structure which demanded evolution because otherwise it folds and shrinks into nothing but what is left is a position of vulnerability.*
49. MAB - *But you did safeguard that didn't you? Yes you did all of that, but your safeguard was to place lots of responsibility onto people and then put a name to the task. By doing so all the people that you did that with responded to the challenge because they were going to be at the sharp end if they didn't succeed personally. So it wasn't as risky as perhaps you thought it was.*
50. PKH - *Well that's so true because with the exception of one or two who have failed to grasp the nettle I am delighted with the fact that most people moved forwards.*
51. MAB - *I was disappointed in what you said at the meeting last night about the initiatives. You said that you felt that we had lost momentum and direction. A year ago we were very focussed and had an enormous number of initiatives and I thought they were all positively moving forwards. Having gone back through the initiatives they are still ticking over, but they have lost their highlight.*
52. PKH - *They have lost their momentum and they have lost an element of accountability. When I spoke last night I highlighted all the ones that I have concern about, but there are a number that I didn't mention because they are moving on very well*
53. MAB - *Success Maker™ for instance is going from strength to strength. It has had its problems but now it is becoming embedded in the school as a real tool for learning but you are right, the literacy initiative peaks and troughs, the Numeracy is limping along. The thrust for teaching and learning is stumbling along which is a shame because that is really important.*

54. PKH - It's a key objective and a key part of our mission statement and we haven't really got to grips with it. I do think that we have got to sit and hammer it through because unless we get it cracked we cannot move forwards.

55. MAB - It will be putting a named person as project manager that will move it forwards. As a school I think we are getting better, target setting for all sorts of areas is improving, we are becoming harder edged but we could be even harder. Thanks for sharing your thoughts with me, I have found them interesting informative and helpful. One of the significant steps for my confidence has been the recognition that other people have doubts and worries as well, and the confirmation by you that what I am doing is both valuable to me, to you and the school and worthwhile to the academy of education.